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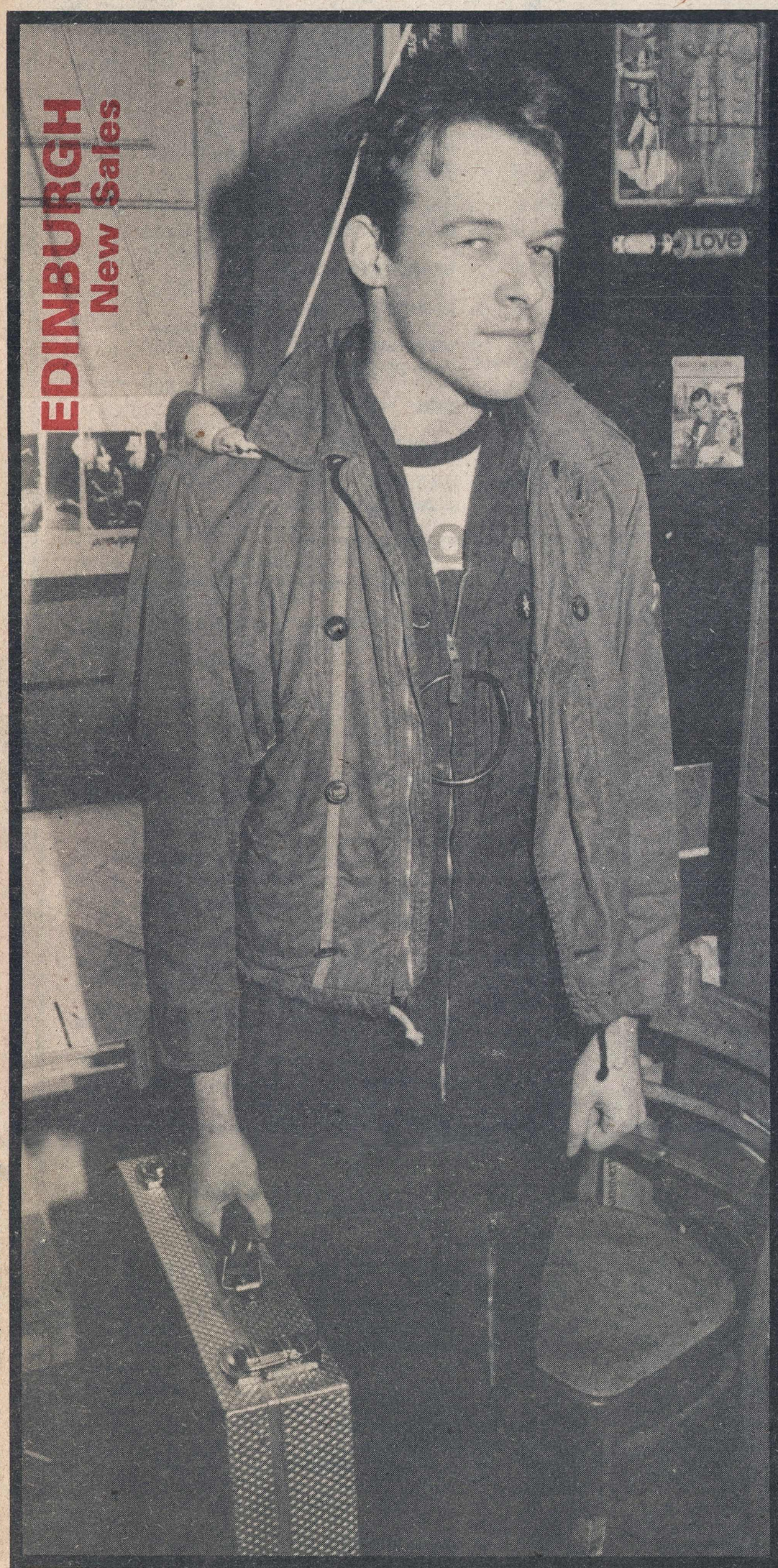
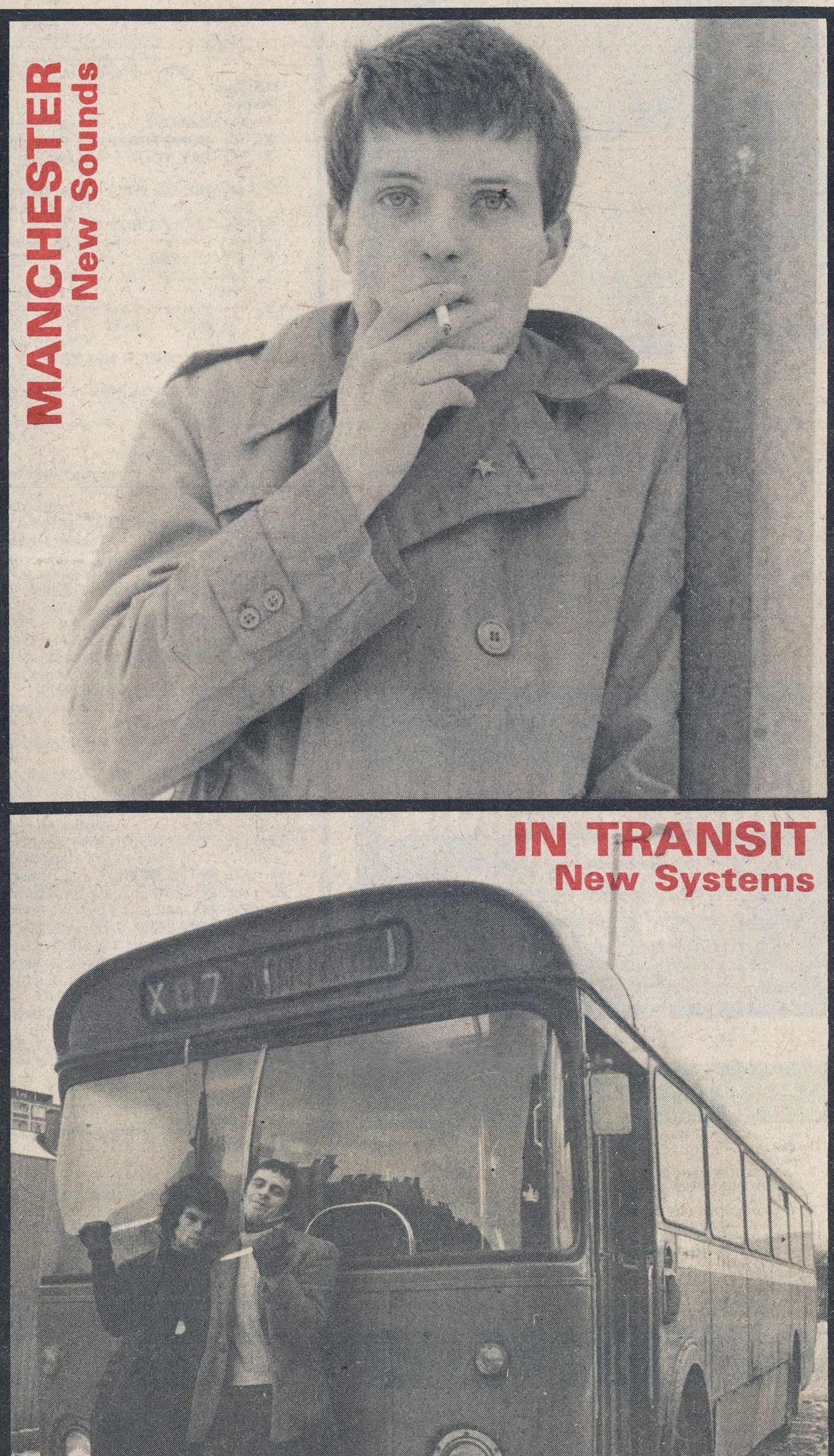
NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

NATIONWIDE ETHNIC CREDIBILITY SPECIAL '79



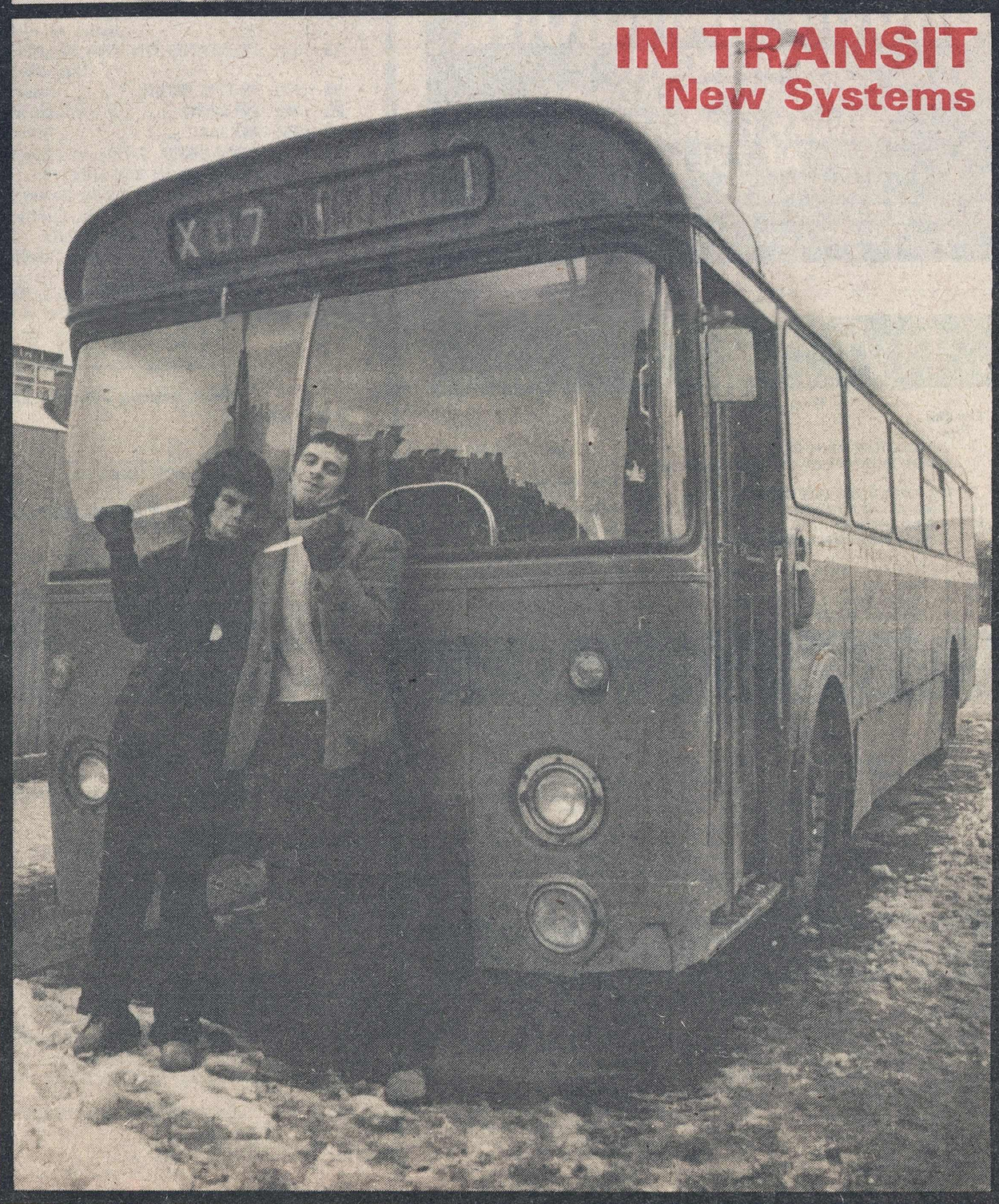
EDINBURGH
New Sales

BOB LAST (Fast Product)/Pic LAURIE EVANS



MANCHESTER
New Sounds

JOY DIVISION/Pic KEVIN CUMMINS



IN TRANSIT
New Systems

HERE & NOW/Pic GEORGE BODNAR

NEW SOLUTIONS TO OLD PROBLEMS

Rock Alternatives pages 7, 16, 22

ADAM + THE ANTZ TOUR

JANUARY

11th Brannigans — LEEDS
12th Royal Standard — BRADFORD
13th Rock Garden — MIDDLESBROUGH
24th Pop Club, Oval Hall, Haxby Road — YORK
25th Norbreck Castle Hotel — BLACKPOOL
26th Russells Club — MANCHESTER
27th Erics — LIVERPOOL
29th Circles Club — SWANSEA
30th Top Rank — CARDIFF
31st Stowaway Club, GWENT

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FIVE YEARS AGO

Week ending January 15, 1974

Last Week	This Week		
2	1	THE SHOW MUST GO ON	Leo Sayer (Chrysalis)
1	2	YOU WON'T FIND ANOTHER FOOL LIKE ME	New Seekers (Polydor)
5	3	DANCE WITH THE DEVIL	Cozy Powell (Rak)
4	4	MY COO-CA-CHOO	Alvin Stardust (Magnet)
15	5	RADAR LOVE	Golden Earring (Track)
8	6	POOL HALL RICHARD/I WISH IT WOULD RAIN	Faces (Warner Brothers)
11	7	LOVE ON A MOUNTAIN TOP	Robert Knight (Monument)
6	8	FOREVER	Roy Wood (Harvest)
3	9	MERRY XMAS EVERYBODY	Slade (Polydor)
—	10	TEENAGE RAMPAGE	Sweet (RCA)

TEN YEARS AGO

Week ending January 15, 1969

Last Week	This Week		
1	1	OB-LA-DI OB-LA-DA	Marmalade (CBS)
5	2	ALBATROSS	Fleetwood Mac (Blue Horizon)
2	3	LILY THE PINK	Scaffold (Parlophone)
3	4	BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP	Foundations (Pye)
7	5	SOMETHING'S HAPPENING	Herman's Hermits (Columbia)
11	6	FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE	Stevie Wonder(Tamla Motown)
4	7	URBAN SPACEMAN	Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band (Liberty)
6	8	SABRE DANCE	Love Sculpture (Parlophone)
10	9	PRIVATE NUMBER	William Bell & Judy Clay (Stax)
12	10	SON OF A PREACHER MAN	Dusty Springfield (Philips)

15 YEARS AGO

Week ending January 17, 1964

Last Week	This Week		
2	1	GLAD ALL OVER	Dave Clark Five (Columbia)
3	2	HIPPY HIPPY SHAKE	Swinging Blue Jeans (HMV)
1	3	I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND	Beatles (Parlophone)
4	4	TWENTY-FOUR HOURS FROM TULSA	Gene Pitney (United Artists)
5	5	I ONLY WANT TO BE WITH YOU	Dusty Springfield (Philips)
7	6	SWINGING ON A STAR	Big Dee Irwin (Colpix)
6	7	SHE LOVES YOU	Beatles (Parlophone)
11	8	STAY	Hollies (Parlophone)
11	9	I WANNA BE YOUR MAN	Rolling Stones (Decca)
8	10	YOU WERE MADE FOR ME	Freddie and the Dreamers (Columbia)

CHARTS

SINGLES

Week ending January 14, 1979

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in Chart	Highest Position
1	(1)	Y.M.C.A.	Village People (Mercury)	6	1
2	(6)	SONG FOR GUY	Elton John (Rocket)	5	2
3	(5)	LAY YOUR LOVE ON ME	Racey (RAK)	5	3
4	(8)	HIT ME WITH YOUR RHYTHM STICK	Ian Dury & The Blockheads (Stiff)	4	4
5	(2)	MARY'S BOY CHILD	Boney M (Atlantic Hansa)	6	1
6	(9)	LE FREAK	Chic (Atlantic)	7	6
7	(3)	A TASTE OF AGGRO	Barron Knights (Epic)	5	3
8	(4)	YOU DON'T BRING ME FLOWERS	Barbra Streisand & Neil Diamond (CBS)	5	4
9	(7)	TOO MUCH HEAVEN	Bee Gees (RSO)	6	4
10	(10)	I LOST MY HEART TO A STARSHIP TROOPER	Sarah Brightman & Hot Gossip (Ariola Hansa)	7	6
11	(18)	SEPTEMBER	Earth Wind & Fire (CBS)	3	11
12	(15)	SHOOTING STAR	Dollar (Carrere/EMI)	5	12
13	(14)	I'LL PUT YOU TOGETHER AGAIN	Hot Chocolate (Rak)	5	13
14	(23)	A LITTLE MORE LOVE	Olivia Newton-John (EMI)	3	14
15	(11)	DO YA THINK I'M SEXY	Rod Stewart (Riva)	8	1
16	(13)	I'M EVERY WOMAN	Chaka Khan (Warner Bros)	5	13
17	(12)	GREASED LIGHTNING	John Travolta (Midsong)	6	12
18	(30)	HELLO THIS IS JOANIE	Paul Evans (Spring)	2	18
19	(16)	TOMMY GUN	Clash (CBS)	5	16
20	(21)	ALWAYS & FOREVER/MIND BLOWING DECISIONS	Heatwave (GTO)	9	7
21	(—)	JUST THE WAY YOU ARE	Barry White (20th Century)	1	21
22	(—)	YOU NEEDED ME	Anne Murray (Capitol)	1	22
23	(25)	HANGING ON THE TELEPHONE	Blondie (Chrysalis)	8	4
24	(17)	IN THE BUSH	Musique (CBS)	7	10
25	(20)	DR WHO	Mankind (Pinnacle)	5	20
26	(26)	MY LIFE	Billy Joel (CBS)	3	26
27	(—)	PROMISES	Buzzcocks (United Artists)	2	27
28	(22)	RAINING IN MY HEART	Leo Sayer (Chrysalis)	3	22
29	(28)	MIRRORS	Sally Oldfield (Bronze)	2	29
30	(28)	DON'T CRY OUT LOUD	Elkie Brooks (A & M)	6	13

BUBBLING UNDER . . .
THEME FROM SUPERMAN — Original Soundtrack (Warner Bros); B.A.B.Y — Rachel Sweet (Stiff).

ALBUMS

Week ending January 14, 1979

This Week	Last Week			Weeks in Chart	Highest Position
1	(1)	SHOWADDYWADDY'S GREATEST HITS 1976-1978	(Arista)	5	1
2	(2)	THE SINGLES 1974-1978	Carpenters (A & M)	6	2
3	(5)	GREASE	Original Soundtrack (RSO)	26	1
4	(4)	NEIL DIAMOND'S 20 GOLDEN GREATS	Neil Diamond (MCA)	8	1
5	(7)	BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN	Rod Stewart (Riva)	6	2
6	(6)	NIGHT FLIGHT TO VENUS	Boney M (Int Hansa)	25	1
7	(3)	MIDNIGHT HUSTLE	Various (K-Tel)	6	3
8	(19)	WAR OF THE WORLDS	Jeff Wayne (CBS)	27	2
9	(30)	DON'T WALK BOOGIE	Various (EMI)	2	9
10	(12)	A SINGLE MAN	Elton John (Rocket)	10	5
11	(8)	EMOTIONS	Various (K-Tel)	10	2
12	(13)	TONIC FOR THE TROOPS	Boomtown Rats (Ensign)	21	4
13	(11)	20 SONGS OF JOY	Harry Secombe (Warwick)	3	11
14	(—)	YOU DON'T BRING ME FLOWERS	Neil Diamond (CBS)	1	14
15	(9)	THE AMAZING DARTS	Darts (K-Tel)	9	7
16	(22)	WINGS GREATEST	Wings (Parlophone)	3	16
17	(17)	EQUINOXE	Jean Michel Jarre (Polydor)	3	17
18	(—)	PARALLEL LINES	Blondie (Chrysalis)	13	7
19	(15)	PUBLIC IMAGE	Public Image (Virgin)	2	15
20	(10)	NIGHT GALLERY	Barron Knights (Epic)	4	10
21	(16)	JAZZ	Queen (EMI)	8	6
22	(14)	INCANTATIONS	Mike Oldfield (Virgin)	3	14
23	(—)	THAT'S LIFE	Sham 69 (Polydor)	4	15
24	(21)	BACKLESS	Eric Clapton (RSO)	4	12
25	(—)	OUT OF THE BLUE	Electric Light Orchestra (Jet)	54	3
26	(—)	52nd STREET	Billy Joel (CBS)	1	26
27	(20)	GIVE 'EM ENOUGH ROPE	Clash (CBS)	7	3
28	(—)	THE BEST OF EARTH WIND AND FIRE VOL 1	Earth Wind & Fire (CBS)	1	28
29	(—)	TOTALLY HOT	Olivia Newton-John (EMI)	1	29
30	(27)	LIONHEART	Kate Bush (EMI)	7	12

BUBBLING UNDER . . .
ARMED FORCES — Elvis Costello (Radar); THE BEATLES 1962-1966 (Parlophone).

U.S. SINGLES

Week ending January 13, 1979

This Week	Last Week		
1	(1)	LE FREAK	Chic
2	(2)	TOO MUCH HEAVEN	Bee Gees
3	(4)	MY LIFE	Billy Joel
4	(3)	YOU DON'T BRING ME FLOWERS	Barbra & Neil
5	(6)	Y.M.C.A.	Village People
6	(7)	HOLD THE LINE	Toto
7	(10)	SEPTEMBER	Earth, Wind & Fire
8	(9)	OOH BABY BABY	Linda Ronstadt
9	(5)	SHARING THE NIGHT TOGETHER	Dr Hook
10	(8)	(OUR LOVE) DON'T THROW IT ALL AWAY	Andy Gibb
11	(12)	PROMISES	Eric Clapton
12	(14)	WE'VE GOT TONITE	Bob Seger & The Silver Bullet Band
13	(17)	EVERY I's A WINNER	Hot Chocolate
14	(19)	A LITTLE MORE LOVE	Olivia Newton-John
15	(21)	FIRE	Pointer Sisters
16	(16)	HOW YOU GONNA SEE ME NOW	Alice Cooper
17	(20)	LOTTA LOVE	Nicolette Larson
18	(18)	BICYCLE RACE / FAT BOTTOMED GIRLS	Queen
19	(—)	DO YA THINK I'M SEXY	Rod Stewart
20	(25)	GOT TO BE REAL	Cheryl Lynn
21	(23)	NEW YORK GROOVE	Ace Frehley
22	(11)	I LOVE THE NIGHT LIFE (DISCO ROUND)	Alicia Bridges
23	(26)	SHAKE IT	Ian Matthews
24	(13)	PART TIME LOVE	Elton John
25	(15)	MACARTHUR PARK	Donna Summer
26	(—)	I WAS MADE FOR DANCIN'	Leif Garrett
27	(30)	DON'T HOLD BACK	Chanson
28	(28)	I WILL BE IN LOVE WITH YOU	Livingston Taylor
29	(29)	PLEASE COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS	Eagles
30	(—)	SOUL MAN	Blues Brothers

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

U.S. ALBUMS

Week ending January 13, 1978

This Week	Last Week		
1	(1)	BARBRA STREISAND'S GREATEST HITS VOL. 2	
2	(2)	52nd STREET	Billy Joel
3	(3)	A WILD & CRAZY GUY	Steve Martin
4	(4)	GREATEST HITS	Barry Manilow
5	(5)	GREASE	Various Artists
6	(6)	BACKLESS	Eric Clapton
7	(7)	JAZZ	Queen
8	(8)	DOUBLE VISION	Foreigner
9	(9)	C'EST CHIC	Chic
10	(10)	THE BEST OF EARTH, WIND & FIRE VOL. 1	
11	(12)	YOU DON'T BRING ME FLOWERS	Neil Diamond
12	(15)	BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN	Rod Stewart
13	(13)	LIVING IN THE U.S.A.	Linda Ronstadt
14	(23)	BRIEFCASE FULL OF BLUES	Blues Brothers
15	(17)	TOTO	Toto
16	(16)	CRUISIN'	Village People
17	(11)	LIVE AND MORE	Donna Summer
18	(14)	LIVE BOOTLEG	Aerosmith
19	(20)	GREATEST HITS 1974-1978	Steve Miller Band
20	(19)	SOME GIRLS	Rolling Stones
21	(24)	WINGS GREATEST	Wings
22	(21)	PIECES OF EIGHT	Styx
23	(27)	MOTOR BOOTY AFFAIR	Parliament
24	(25)	GREATEST HITS	Commodores
25	(26)	ACE FREHLEY	
26	(18)	GREATEST HITS	Steely Dan
27	(—)	TOTALLY HOT	Olivia Newton John
28	(29)	DOG & BUTTERFLY	Heart
29	(—)	THE STRANGER	Billy Joel
30	(—)	GENE SIMMONS	

Courtesy "CASH BOX"

Gen X scrap clubs

NOW ONLY COLLEGES AND SEATED VENUES

GENERATION X's upcoming British tour, scheduled for next month, marks a new step in the band's development — taking them away from the club circuit and into seated theatres. This is the direct result of trouble on their pre-Christmas U.K. tour, when there were many "unnecessary incidents" involving bouncers and audience members — which finally convinced the band that they should turn their backs on unseated club venues.

Citing Cromer West Runton Pavilion, Dunstable California and Newcastle Mayfair as three places where trouble flared, manager Stewart Joseph told NME: "The punk circuit is badly organised, and doing nothing to provide people with good entertainment. So from now on, we'll be concentrating on seated venues and universities.

"In our experience, we've found that college promoters have more energy, more heart and more genuine interest than anyone else. But we shall be insisting that all college gigs must be open to the general public."

As previously reported, the next Gen X tour opens at Malvern Winter Gardens on February 9. Four Scottish gigs have now been confirmed — at Falkirk Maniqui (February 15), Edinburgh University (16), Aberdeen University (17) and Fife St. Andrew's University (18). About 11 more dates have still to be finalised, running through to February 27.

And they could have a hit on their hands by the time they go on the road, because advance orders for their new Chrysalis single "King Rocker" suggest that it's a strong chart contender. Their new album is due out at the end of this month.

PURSEY PACKAGE

JIMMY PURSEY with the contents of his package

PURSEY'S PACKAGE is the name given to a 13-date tour starting this weekend, featuring The Angelic Upstarts and The Invaders — the first two signings to JP Productions, the label formed by Sham 69 front man Jimmy Pursey. The gigs are at Birmingham Barbarella's (tonight, Thursday), Wolverhampton Lafayette (Friday), Peterborough Technical College (Saturday), Chelmsford Chancellor Hall (Sunday), Bath Technical College (January 16), Newport Stowaway (17), Swansea Circles (18), Bradford University (19), Sheffield University (20), Leeds Polytechnic (25), Stafford North Staffs Polytechnic (26), Leicester Polytechnic (27) and London Marquee (29) — and don't be surprised if Pursey himself shows up at a number of these gigs. Both bands will have singles released by JP Productions, through Polydor, in February.

ANTS ON THE MARCH

ADAM & THE ANTS interrupt sessions for their new Decca album to undertake a series of dates this month. They play Leeds Brannigan's (tonight, Thursday), Bradford Royal Standard (Friday), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (Saturday), York Pop Club (January 24), Blackpool Norbreck Castle (25), Manchester Russell Club (26), Liverpool Eric's (27), Swansea Circles Club (29) and Newport Stowaway (31). They'll also be doing a London gig next weekend, but details are not yet finalised.

— and other news waves

BETTE BRIGHT and The Illuminations are being lined up for their most important British tour to date, occupying the first half of February, and details of their itinerary are expected next week.

THE DAMNED have re-arranged their gig at Croydon Greyhound yet again — it now takes place this coming Sunday (14). Originally set for Christmas Eve, it was switched to January 7, then postponed because of redecorations at the venue.

IAN DURY's gig at Ilford Odeon two days before Christmas nearly ended in disaster, when part of the floor at the unseated venue collapsed under the weight of incessant dancing and stamping. Fortunately the gaping hole was covered by carpet, which merely sagged, so preventing anyone falling through. The gig was able to continue after the danger area was roped off.

TOM ROBINSON has written and recorded the theme song for a Thames TV documentary series about the origins of the human race, called "Our People". The seven half-hour shows will be fully networked, starting in most regions tonight (Thursday), though screening does vary in some areas. In the seventh and last programme, the Rock Against Racism movement will be featured.

Mangione, Egan, McLaughlin gigs

CHUCK MANGIONE — one of America's top contemporary musical talents, whose album "Feels So Good" was in the U.S. charts for over a year until recently — plays his first major U.K. concert next month. It's at the London Palladium on Sunday, February 4, as part of a seven-nation European tour including a show at the Midem Festival in Cannes. He also appears in BBC-2's "Old Grey Whistle Test" next Tuesday and Saturday (16 and 20). He'll be supported by his regular backing quartet.

WALTER EGAN flies into Britain in three weeks' time, together with his backing band, to play a one-off London show — it's at The Venue in Victoria on Thursday, February 1, and tickets are now on sale all at the one price of £3. To coincide with his visit, Polydor release a single on January 19 called "Hot Summer Nights", taken from his latest album "Not Shy". Egan and the band are also appearing in BBC-2's "Old Grey Whistle Test" on Tuesday, January 30 (repeated the following Saturday).

JOHN McLAUGHLIN returns to London next month to play a one-off concert at the Royal Albert Hall on Wednesday, February 14, which is being billed as a "Valentine's Day Special". It's strictly an acoustic concert, with McLaughlin accompanied only by Larry Coryell and flamenco guitarist Paco de Lucia. Tickets are priced £5, £4.50, £4, £3.50, £2.50 and £2, and are expected to go on sale within the next few days.

YOUR NME...

And the world's most beleaguered rock weekly staggers on — now assailed not by one, but by two, industrial disputes. For the past month, the National Union of Journalists' dispute with the Newspaper Society publishers has been seriously affecting our proofreading capabilities — and now, because of the lorry drivers' strike, supplies of newsprint are running low at our printworks.

What this means to you, to put it bluntly, is a small NME plagued by errors such as the bizarre French on last week's cover. Please bear with us, anyway. It may be scrappy around the edges, but it's still the goods, n'est-ce pas? Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible.

RAWLS MARCH DATES

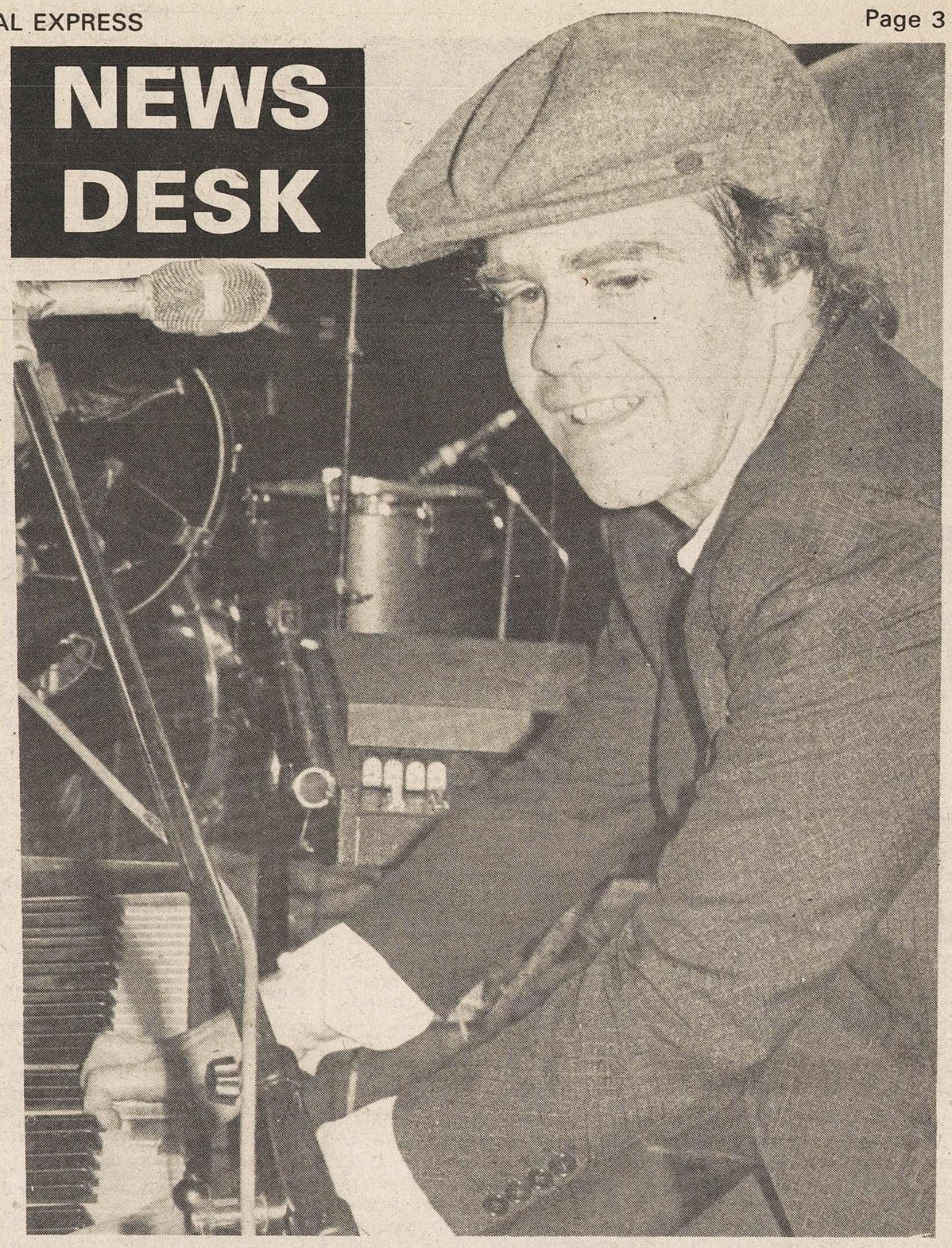
LOU RAWLS comes to Britain in March for a series of six major concerts, as part of a full-scale European tour. He plays Birmingham Odeon (March 6), Slough Thames Hall (7), Eastbourne Congress (8), Poole Wessex Hall (10), London Palladium (11) and Manchester Apollo (12).

It's the first U.K. tour by Rawls, who is probably best-known for his hit single "You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine", and is recognised in the business as "a singer's singer". Tour promoters are Kennedy Street Enterprises, and Rawls will also be making several TV appearances, including a spot in BBC-1's new Shirley Bassey series.

RORY FOR MARQUEE!

RORY GALLAGHER, who plays three nights at London Hammersmith Odeon this weekend as the climax of his British tour, makes a surprise appearance at London's Marquee Club next Monday (15). It's a special benefit show, with all proceeds donated to charity, and it's also being recorded for Broadcast in Britain and America.

NEWS DESK



ELTON'S 30-DATE COMEBACK TOUR

DETAILS OF Elton John's first British concert tour since 1976, and his first since revoking his decision to retire from the stage, were announced this week. As previously reported, it's virtually a solo tour, with Elton accompanied only by percussionist Ray Cooper — and with no support act. Elton headlines a string of 30 concerts at 15 different venues throughout Britain and Ireland, including six successive nights in London in early April. And the tour, promoted by Harvey Goldsmith, goes out under the banner of "A Single Man Plus Ray Cooper".

Dates are Glasgow Apollo (March 17 and 18), Edinburgh Odeon (19), Newcastle City Hall (21 and 22), Preston Guildhall (23), Belfast Whitla Hall (26 and 27), Dublin National Stadium (29 and 30), London Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (April 2—7 inclusive), Brighton Dome (9—10), Southampton Gaumont (11 and 12), Bristol Hippodrome (14 and 15), Oxford New Theatre (17), Coventry Theatre (18), Derby Assembly Rooms (19), Birmingham Hippodrome (21 and 22) and Manchester Apollo (24, 25 and 26).

Ticket prices for the London shows are £7.50, £6.50, £5 and £3, and are obtainable by post or personal application from the venue, or in person only from one of the two Harvey Goldsmith Box-Offices (50 New Bond Street and 85 Kings Road). For the Dublin and Belfast concerts, all tickets are priced £5. At all other venues, admission is £5, £4 and £3. And in all cases, they go on sale at 10 am on Friday, February 2. All concerts begin at 8 pm, except at Drury Lane on April 2 only (7.30 pm).

Prior to his British outing, Elton undertakes an extensive European tour, playing 29 concerts in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Holland, France, Belgium, Switzerland and Spain between February 5 and March 11 — the nearest being at Paris Theatre de Champs Elysees (February 20—24 inclusive). It's the first time he has toured Europe so comprehensively.

HANCOCK CONCERTS

HERBIE HANCOCK and his band are playing a series of major concerts next month. Those confirmed so far are Bristol Colston Hall (February 12), Manchester Free Trade Hall (13), London Rainbow (16), Birmingham Odeon (18) and Liverpool Empire (19), with the likelihood of more to follow. They'll also be filming a BBC-2 "Rock Goes To College" show on February 14 at London Chelsea College.

Hancock is joined in the band by well-known session drummer Alphonse Mouzon, who has occasionally fronted his own outfit — and the rest of the line-up is Webster Lewis (keyboards), Benny Maupin (reeds), Bill Summers (percussion), Paul Jackson (bass) and Ray Obiedo (guitar). A new Hancock album titled "Feets Don't Fail Me Now" is released by CBS on February 9, preceded on January 19 by his single "You Bet Your Love".

MUSIC BY POST

Comprehensive Catalogue free on receipt of 7p/9p stamp

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PASH MUSIC STORES, 5 ELGIN CRESCENT, LONDON W11

CHARLES O'CONNOR (left) and BARRY DEVLIN of Horslips

MAJOR DATES FOR HORSLIPS

IRISH Band Horslips headline a major British concert tour, starting at the end of this month and continuing through February.

Dates confirmed so far are at London Hammersmith Odeon (February 2), Manchester Apollo (3), Birmingham Hippodrome (4), Edinburgh Usher Hall (8), Glasgow Apollo (9), Bristol Colston Hall (16) and Oxford New Theatre (18). These gigs are interspersed with a string of college shows, and among those pencilled in are Leicester Polytechnic (January 31), Exeter University (February 5), Liverpool University (7), Newcastle Polytechnic (10) and Keele University (14).

Further dates, both on the concert circuit and on the campus, will be added to this schedule. The tour ties in with the January 19 release by DJM Records of the band's new album "The Man Who Built America". The LP's title track will be issued as a single on February 16. TV and radio appearances are also being lined up.

Streetband's 12 gigs

STREETBAND continue to cash in on the recent success of their "Toast" single, by playing a further series of dates this month — while at the same time aiding promotion of their latest single "One More Step", issued to coincide with these gigs. They visit London Kensington Nashville (tonight, Thursday), Stafford North Staffs Polytechnic (Friday), Leicester Polytechnic (Saturday), Portsmouth Polytechnic (January 17), Retford Porterhouse (19), Watford Wall Hall College (20), Uxbridge Brunel University (21), London Marquee (25), Scarborough Penthouse (26), Newcastle University (27), Dumfries Stagecoach (28) and Saltburn Philmore Disco (29). As reported, their album "London" comes out next month.

● THE BISHOPS have a late London concert booking this Saturday (13) — at the Electric Ballroom in Camden Town.

Kinks play 16

A 16-CONCERT schedule was this week announced for The Kinks, confirming plans exclusively revealed by NME last week. It's their first major U.K. tour for three years, and takes in Oxford Polytechnic (January 18), Sheffield University (19), Leicester Polytechnic (20), Liverpool Empire (21), Newcastle City Hall (22), Edinburgh Odeon (23), Glasgow Apollo (24), Bradford St George's Hall (25), Manchester Apollo (26), Birmingham Odeon (27), Cardiff University (29), Bristol Colston Hall (30), Southampton Gaumont (31), Brighton Dome (February 1) and St Albans City Hall (2 and 3), with the possibility of a London date being added later. Support act is The Stadium Dogs. After the tour, The Kinks go into the studio to start work on their new Arista album.

UPCOMING TOURS

Parker, Hillage, Gaynor

GRAHAM PARKER & The Rumour are to headline an extensive British concert tour in March, probably extending through into April, and the itinerary is currently being finalised. Meanwhile, The Rumour have their own album issued by Stiff on February 16, titled "Frogs, Sprouts, Clogs & Krauts" — and preceded on February 2 by their single "Frozen Years".

STEVE HILLAGE and **TANGERINE DREAM** are both being lined up for British tours, according to Virgin Records, who will be releasing new albums by both acts to coincide with their outings. The two tours are expected to open fairly soon, either in late January or next month, and details are promised for next week.

LENE LOVICH and **WRECKLESS ERIC,** who were both members of Stiff Records' autumn package "Be Stiff", will be touring Britain separately this winter. Lene, whose new single "Lucky Number" comes out on January 26, sets on in early February. And Eric plays a two-leg schedule — the first in late January and early February, and the second in March.

GLORIA GAYNOR and **THE CHI-LITES** are to tour Britain together in the late winter. Gloria was originally planning a January visit, but her tour has now been put back to late February to enable The Chi-Lites to team up with her. Gloria's new single "I Will Survive" is released by Polydor on January 19, followed next month by her album "Love Tracks".

. . . and Average Whites

AVERAGE WHITE BAND —who originally planned a November tour here, but postponed their visit in order to finish their new album — are now being lined up for a string of British dates next month, opening at London Rainbow on February 17. They'll be supported by Jamaican band Inner Circle, recently signed by Island who release their single "Everything Is Great" on February 9, followed by an LP in March.

THE ENID HIT THE BIG-TIME

THE ENID set out next month on their most important tour to date, headlining at major venues around the country. Their outing coincides with the release of their first Pye album "Touch Me", written and produced entirely by the group. Support act on all dates is another Pye act Wounded John Scott Cree, who also has a new album coming out. The itinerary comprises:

Aberdeen Capitol (February 8), Edinburgh Leith Theatre (9), Glasgow Apollo (10), Manchester Apollo (11), Sheffield City Hall (13), Newcastle City Hall (14), Bradford St. George's Hall (15), Derby King's Hall (16), Birmingham Town Hall (20), Guildford Civic Hall (24 and 25), Canterbury Odeon (26), Oxford New Theatre (27) and London Hammersmith Odeon (28).

Marshall Hain's keyboards man

MARSHALL HAIN have now filled the vacancy created by the pre-Christmas departure of Julian Marshall. They've enlisted former Stretch and Mungo Jerry keyboards man John Cook, who's now busy rehearsing with Kit Hain and the other members of the band. They go into the studios at the end of this month to record a single (for February release) and album (late March), and tour Britain in late Spring.

EW & F SWITCH

EARTH WIND & FIRE'S gig on March 2 is at Stafford New Bingley Hall — not Birmingham Bingley Hall, as inadvertently announced by CBS last week. Wembley Arena (March 3 and 4) remain unchanged.

UFO cancel first night

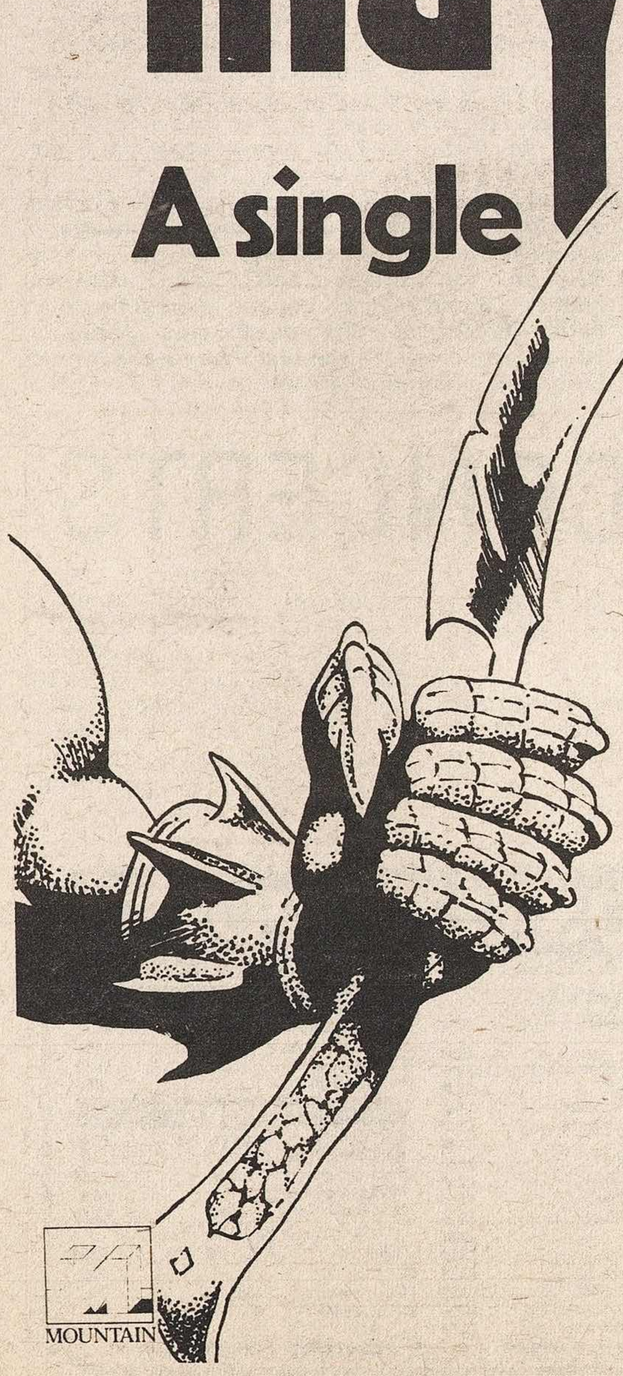
UFO have pulled the scheduled first night of their extensive 30-date British tour, which was to have been at Cardiff University tomorrow (Friday). They say this is due to the venue making stringent alterations in rider contracts for visiting bands — including a £100,000 indemnity against damages, a ban on lights flown from the ceiling, and a similar ban on backdrops of any kind. "This effectively means that you can't put on a show there," said a spokesman.

may the sunshine

SINGLE NAZ 3

A single cut from their new album

"NO MEAN CITY"



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NEWS in brief

ABBA are to record their own BBC-1 special for transmission at Easter — titled "Abba In Switzerland", it's being filmed in mid-February. And while the crew is in Switzerland, producer Michael Hurll is taping a second show for screening at around the same period — it's called "Disco In The Snow" and features Boney M, Leo Sayer and The Jacksons.

ALAN STIVELL is among the bill-toppers at this year's Edinburgh Folk Festival, beginning on March 23. He headlines on March 31, and is expected to play other U.K. dates at around the same period. Among a host of other names already booked for the festival are Silly Wizard, The McCalmans and Bill Barclay.

DAVID STEWART has left National Health, the band he co-founded in 1975. The split came following a disagreement with the rest of the group, concerning the organisation of a proposed tour of Spain and Italy. Says Stewart: "I was happy with the music, but couldn't see eye to eye on other matters, so I left". Now he's planning to work on new projects with different musicians, and to record an album of his own music.

LIVERPOOL EXPRESS have changed their name to L.E.X., which is how they're billed on their new single "I Want Nobody But You", issued by Warners on January 19. On the same day, Thames TV screen a documentary on the group, filmed at Olympic Studios while they were recording their upcoming album "L.E.X." The LP is scheduled for March release, and there are plans for a U.K. tour to coincide.

CHEAP FLIGHTS, the band formed and fronted by John Grimaldi, have so far confirmed seven gigs for this month. They are at London New Barnet Duke of Lancaster (tomorrow, Friday), Stevenage Swan (Sunday), London Harrow Rd., Windsor Castle (18), Middlesbrough Teesside Polytechnic (19), Middlesbrough Rock Garden (20), Sheffield Limit Club (23) and Mountain Ash The Palace (31).

JUNE TABOR is expected to top the first Epping Forest Folk festival in North London, over the weekend of May 11-13. Among names already set are Fred Wedlock, Pete Atkin, Derroll Adams, Pete & Chris Coe, Dave Evans, Mr. Gladstone's Bag, Martin Simpson, Jenny Beeching, Hot Vultures, Nic Jones, Spredthick and Alex Atterson.

CHINA STREET return from an Irish tour, which ends at Belfast Queen's University next Tuesday (16), to begin a new series of British gigs. First confirmed are London Islington Hope & Anchor (January 18), Scarborough Penthouse (19), Liverpool Eric's (25), Birmingham Barbarella's (26) and Manchester Polytechnic (27).

CHARLIE AiNLEY, former front man with Charlie & The Wide Boys, plays two London dates this month — at Victoria The Venue (this Saturday, 13) and Camden Music Machine (25). He's backed by a band comprising Richard Worthy (guitar), Paul Martinez (bass), Tony Ashton (organ), Stuart Elliot (drums), Pete Wingfield (piano), Helen Chappell and Vicki Brown (backing vocals) and a brass section led by Howie Casey.

Blondie return here in April

BLONDIE are now expected to return to Britain in April to headline a series of major concerts — and it's understood that their proposed itinerary includes a string of at least four nights at a leading London venue, probably the Hammersmith Odeon. This is because the band prefer playing theatres, rather than venturing into large arenas like Wembley or Earls Court. It's expected that their fourth album, on which they've already completed preliminary work, will be issued to coincide with their visit.

This latest tour, also taking in Europe, temporarily supersedes plans for Debbie Harry to star in a re-make of the sci-fi detective film "Alphaville", as reported in our Christmas issue.

With Debbie playing the part of Natasha von Braun, daughter of an evil scientist, the picture would co-star ex-King Crimson stalwart Robert Fripp as Peter Cheyney's famous private-eye character Lemmy Caution. The film tells the story of a city ruled by an electronic brain, and the original version was made in 1966 with Eddie Constantine playing Caution — and it's planned for him to re-appear in the re-make, this time cast as an older detective.

The movie would be co-directed by Blondie guitarist (and Debbie's boyfriend) Chris Stein and celebrated New York film-maker Amos Poe — with the soundtrack by Stein, Harry and Fripp. But it's unlikely that the Blondie band would appear in the picture, or perform the music.

But, apparently, all this is very tentative for the moment. Commented Blondie's spokesman: "I can't confirm anything at this stage, because there isn't anything to confirm. The film is basically just an idea, which has now taken the first step beyond being simply an idea. There's certainly no date set for filming, or even for rehearsals, and there's not likely to be for quite a while. As far as Debbie is concerned, it's first things first."

And the first things, evidently, are the fourth Blondie album and the spring tour.

Chris De Burgh: circuit crusader

CHRIS DE BURGH headlines a major British tour, starting early next month and tied in with the February 2 release of his new A&M album "Crusader". He'll be supported throughout the tour, which includes two nights at London's Dominion Theatre, by Catherine Howe. His backing band comprises Kit Johnson (bass), Gil Morrow (keyboards), Tim Wynveen (guitar) and Jeff Phillips (drums).

Dates are Cambridge Lady Mitchell Hall (February 7), Brighton Dome (10), Bristol Hippodrome (11), Southampton Gaumont (12), Bournemouth Winter Gardens (13), Manchester Apollo (15), Hull New Theatre (16), Newcastle City Hall (17), Aberdeen Capitol (18), Edinburgh Usher Hall (20), Glasgow Apollo (21), London Tottenham-Ct. Rd. Dominion Theatre (23 and 24), Croydon Fairfield Hall (25), Leicester De Montfort Hall (26), Birmingham Odeon (27), Liverpool Empire (28), Oxford New Theatre (March 2), Ipswich Gaumont (3), Coventry Theatre (5) and Dublin Stadium (8—10 inclusive).

The new album was recorded in London under the supervision of Kate Bush's producer Andrew Powell. It contains ten new De Burgh compositions, one of which will be issued as a single early next month. After the British dates, he begins a tour of Canada and the United States.

Return to stage for Dave Lewis

DAVE LEWIS is now back on the road, together with his band, following the injuries he sustained in a car accident in November which caused the remainder of his 1978 gigs to be scrapped. Dates confirmed so far are at London Camden Music Machine (tonight, Thursday), Scarborough Penthouse (Friday), Bedford College (Saturday), London Marquee (January 19) and Portsmouth Polytechnic (30).

JOHN MARTYN plays two more concerts at the end of this month — at Swansea Brangwyn Hall (January 27) and Bath Pavilion (28).

THE MOVIE "Bob Marley & The Wailers: Live", filmed at the Rainbow and currently being shown in London, goes on selected release in late January. Support film features Millie Jackson during her first 1978 visit to Britain.

Landscape on the rounds

LANDSCAPE begin another of their regular tours at the end of next week, this one titled "The Eighties Begin Here". Among dates so far confirmed are Leeds Fforde Green Hotel (January 19), Sheffield Limit Club (20), London Camden Music Machine (24), London Camberwell School of Art (26), Basingstoke Central Studio (27), Manchester Polytechnic (30), Yorks Arts Centre (31), Manchester Band On The Wall (February 1), Leeds Playhouse (2), Sheffield Hurlfield Campus (3), Birmingham Arts Lab (4), Leicester Phoenix Theatre (5), London Purcell Room (6), Basildon Sweeney's (7), Norwich East Anglia University (8), Cardiff Chapter Arts Centre (9), Shrewsbury School (10), Cambridge Jazz Club (12) and London Battersea Arts Centre (17). More gigs are being finalised.

OFF THE RECORD

● A long-awaited new album from **Kiki Dee**, her first for two years, is released by Rocket this weekend. Titled "Stay With Me", it was recorded in Los Angeles where she now lives.

● A new **Chic** album titled "Tres Chic" is released by WEA next week, to coincide with the group's one-off concert at London Hammersmith Odeon on January 20, exclusively reported by NME last week. The LP has been redesigned for the U.K. market, with the added inclusion of Chic's three hit singles.

● Two of the acts featured in Beggars Banquet's upcoming package tour "T'Charabanc Trip" have new singles and albums due out next month to coincide with the itinerary. Australian artist **Duffo's** first British LP is "Duffo" and his single is "Give Me Back Me Brain". **Johnny G's** debut album is "Sharp/Natural" while his fourth single, backed by Graham Parker's horn section, is called "Golden Years". Tour dates are expected to be announced next week.

● **Shakin' Stevens,** one of the stars of the West End musical "Elvis", revives the oldie "Endless Sleep" for his new single. It's issued this weekend by Epic.

● **Ian Dury & The Blockheads'** hit single "Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick" - which has already sold over 250,000 copies in conventional seven-inch form — is now also being made available as a 12-incher, the first to be issued by Stiff Records. Dury and the band are due to begin recording their eagerly-awaited second album very shortly.

● **Patrik Fitzgerald's** nine-track 12-inch single "Paranoid Ward" has been reduced in size to an eight-track seven-inch single, with a corresponding drop in price from £1.99 to 99p. Originally pressed by Small Wonder Records in a limited edition of 5,000 12-inchers, it's now been made available as a conventional single through the usual specialist outlets, though one track had to be dropped to maintain quality. Fitzgerald is now working on his debut album and a new single for Polydor.

● **Dr. Feelgood's** new single, released by United Artists this weekend, is the Nick Lowe-John Mayo song "Milk And Alcohol" (from their LP "Private Practice"). Of the first 50,000 copies, half are pressed in white vinyl and the other half in brown, to symbolise the song title!

● A 12-inch single extracted from **Jeff Wayne's** hit album "War Of The Worlds" is issued this week by CBS — it's the full-length version of "Thunderchild", featuring **Chris Thompson** on vocals. Same label issues an extended version, running almost eight minutes, of "Je Suis Music" by **Cerrone** — it's another 12-incher and is taken from their album "Cerrone IV". Singles on CBS include a shortened version of **Bob Dylan's** "Changing Of The Guards" from his "Street Legal" set, and **Barbara Dickson's** "Fallen Angel" from her "Sweet Oasis" LP.

● Release of **The Sex Pistols'** double soundtrack album "The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle", originally planned for last weekend, has been delayed. Virgin say they now hope to have it out at the end of the month, though no precise date is yet scheduled.

Hunter LP and Ronson reunion

IAN HUNTER has signed with Chrysalis Records, and is currently putting the finishing touches to his first album for the label, provisionally titled "The Outsider". The LP marks the renewal of the partnership with his long-time collaborator Mick Ronson, as well as featuring three members of Bruce Springsteen's E.Street Band — Roy Bittan (piano), Garry Tallent (bass) and Max Weinberg (drums). Consisting entirely of new Hunter songs, it's due for April release, and will be his first since "Overnight Angels" two years ago — though he has recently produced the new Generation X album, due out at the end of this month.

● **Terraplane,** the band fronted by ex-Groundhogs leader Tony McPhee, recorded a live four-track EP during their pre-Christmas European tour. Release is planned for next month.

BABYS ISSUED — HEAD FIRST!

THE BABYS have their third album "Head First" issued by Chrysalis on January 19, and a single extracted from it — titled "Everytime I Think Of You" — comes out the same day. The band, now permanently based in America, have replaced keyboards player Mike Corby with Jonathan Cain — and have augmented their line-up by bringing in Rick Philips on bass, so freeing John Waite to concentrate on vocals. After touring the U.S. and Japan in the winter, The Babys are due to visit Britain and Europe in the spring. From left to right above, they are Cain, Waite, Philips, Tony Brock and Walter Stocker.

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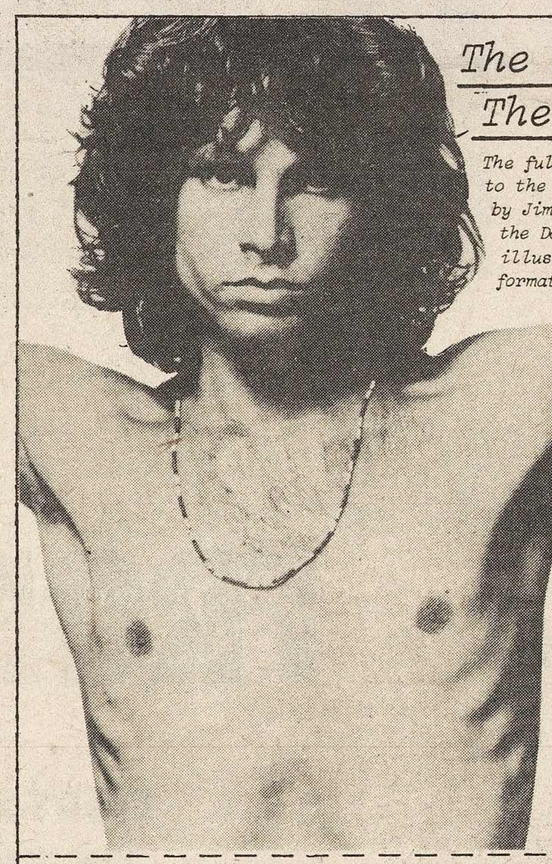

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New Stirrings On The North-West Frontier

The Underground sticks its Collective head overground to explain how the rest of the world went wrong. Please fasten your safety helmets now.

Words: PAUL MORLEY

Pix: KEVIN CUMMINS

OVER THE LAST few months there have been definite dislocations in the way the British rock business is structured that are both depressing and satisfying.

The major labels have managed quite easily to steady themselves after the cutting commotion of 75/76, and have carefully invested in and subdued the activity. They did their jobs, only the most careless making mistakes.

Economically the dozen or so new bands captured and marketed represent a fair future. The consumers are responsive and, most importantly, young — and the bands themselves have generously been given more control over their careers than is usual within the system.

So the labels have done well. They've diverted and diffused a dangerous movement and are making money. And it seems that 90 per cent of all consumers are satisfied.

These new investements are tiny next to the current gargantuan financial and statistical realities of the brainwashing disco/compilation/TV packages, but supply an illusion that the labels are offering choices, and were necessary so the labels could control and dilute the movement.

Now the good news.

Totally separate from the Business's assidious activity here's a whole mass of diverse and distinct new rock musicians whose activity is implicity concerned with preventing this suffocation of choice.

Imagination and individualism currently dominates rock if not commercial rock — like never before. Take a look around you . . . but not where the business tells you.

This genuine underground music reaches a small, enthusiastic audience, and despite the reserved and/or reactionary decisions of many fans who, for example, continue to demand the vague ideals of 75/76, dourly dismissing the eclectic and exciting new force of synthesiser units with depressing abruptness, this audience is going to flourish as it becomes obvious that the major labels have manufactured a new pop muzak, however irresistible out of an important revolution.

We should be writing books about the birth of rock'n'roll, not obituaries. We should be fighting the control of the radio and labels, not derisively ignoring this underground.

Because ultimately it's not that anyone is denying anybody else the right to purchase Showaddywaddy or Travolta or Yes or GenX or whoever in droves, as amusing or saddening as it is. Simply that there must be choice. We need choice.

For examples of the wide choices that exist in rock, obscurely but certainly, let's look to Manchester. The new music exists anywhere and everywhere. No-one is ashamed or nervous of making music. Manchester I know best.

The amount of music in Manchester would be substantial even if it was spread right across the nation and not just housed in a limited locality. But you may not be aware of this — because once the industry struck with Magazine and Buzzcocks, failed with The Drones and The Dogs, and were puzzled by the Fall, it scurried away.

Manchester, however, created its own network. Rabid Records you'll already know. But apart from Rabid there are three record labels that aren't purely group vehicles.

New Hormones, which operates from 50 Newton Street Manchester, will soon release records by the Tiller Boys and Lundus, and re-release Spiral Scratch.

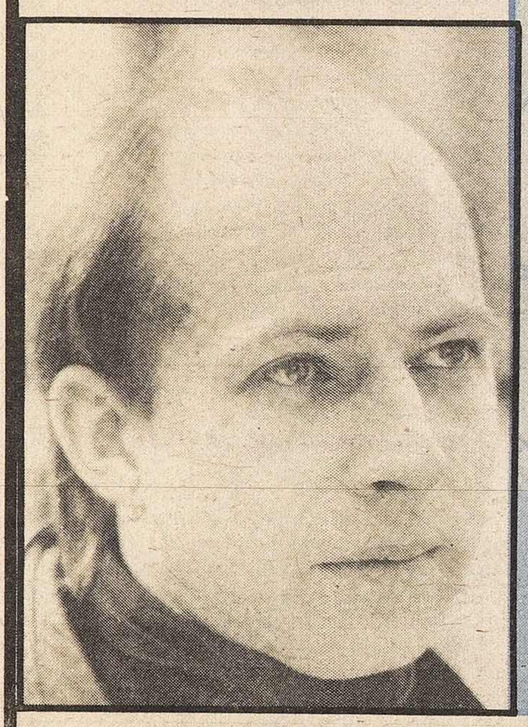
Factory Records (86 Palatine Road, Didsbury, Manchester) release at the end of this month a strong sampler containing music from John Dowie, Cabaret Voltaire, Durutti Column and Joy Division.

Object Music have released records by Spherical Objects and The Passage, with a handful more planned.

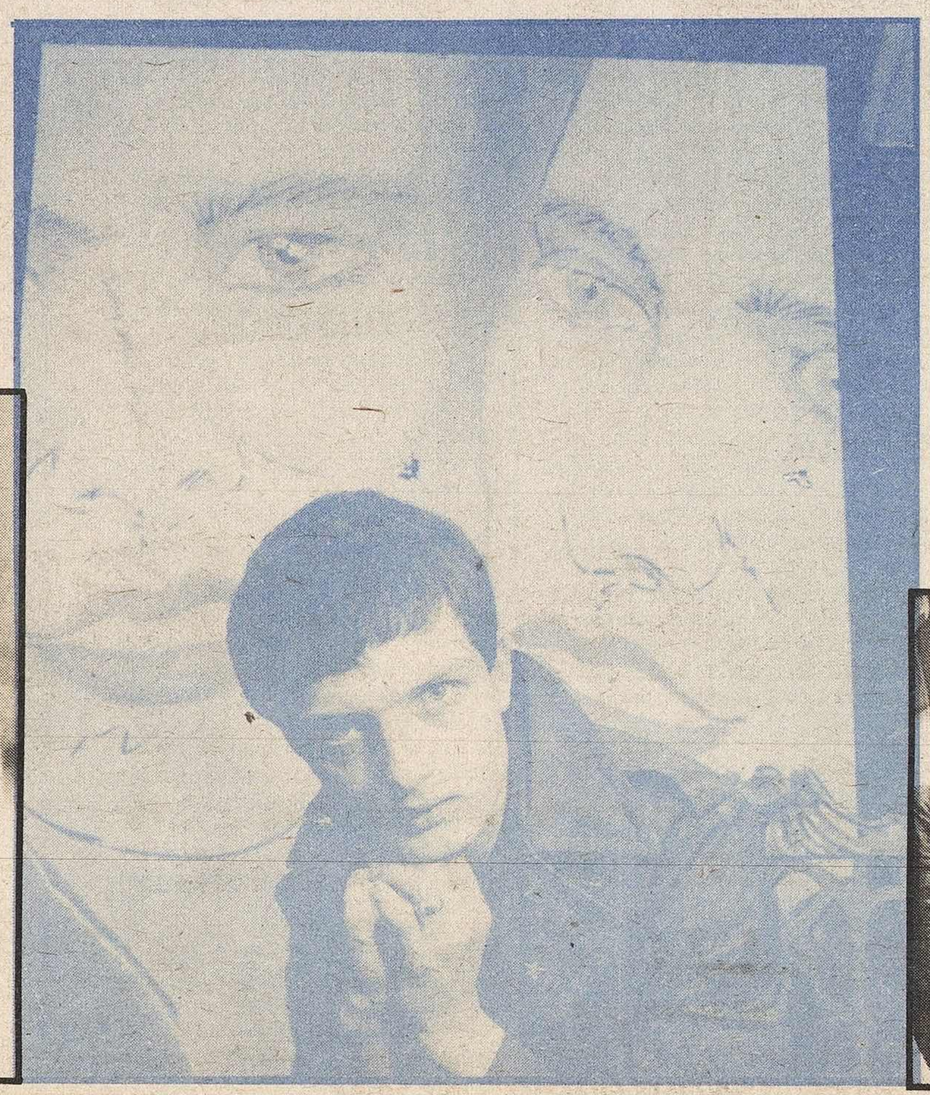
The three groups who interested me most are Sperical Objects, Joy Division and The Passage. All are totally committed, totally assured, totally independent.

Spherical Objects are a quintet who were conceived in June 1976, initiated in May 1978, and formed around the

■ *Continues over page*



STEVE SALOMAR



IAN CURTIS of JOY DIVISION — props courtesy Art and Furniture, Manchester.

SPHERICAL OBJECTS

IAN CURTIS again

■ *From previous page*

delicate, driving songs of Steve Solomar.

Solomar stumbled accidentally upon Frederick Burrows (bass), John Bisset-Smith (guitar), Duncan Presbury (keyboards) and Roger Hilton (drums) . . . after auditioning 100 musicians. He himself is 28, passionately involved with music "ever since "I was twelve", sensitive, shrewd and ambitious.

"I'd been in bands long enough to know now what I want, and I've got reasonably strong ideas on how I want to present it.

"I found that musicians of my own age were very cliche-riden so I looked for younger musicians where the chances of them being less spoilt were greater. Everyone in the band has freshness, they're all 20 or under, and they play effectively without in any way being virtuosos."

Solomar's unswerving confidence in his own ability and style was quickly established with Spherical Objects, the first group he'd felt completely happy with. They first performed on May 28 last year after five months careful, systematic rehearsals, and by July 10 were in Manchester's Arrow/Indigo Studios recording an album, "Past And Parcel.

Such in his own highly esoteric, archly flamboyant music.

"At the time we recorded the album," he calmly recalls, "we'd done three gigs. But I knew that the material I had for the album didn't have to be embellished too much — there's great variety in our music. And I knew the band was ready.

The actual content of the album I'd had ready for over a year. It just seemed a logical step to produce one, on our own Object label."

Their first single, "The Kill", was released at the end of last year.

"I could see, from other material we had, that there was going to be a logical progression. The first album, then two singles, then the next album. That would have been logical. The flow wouldn't have been as logical if the single had been the first release."

Although the album was done quickly, it isn't sloppy. "Past And Parcel" is simply and sensibly packaged, and despite being recorded and mixed in 10 hours ("all one takes and live") the sound is clear and clever — a necessity for what is a naturally fussy music.

Recommended price was £2.50p.

"To finance the record meant borrowing about 800 quid. I took months preparing the processes. At £2.50p we still make a profit, something you normally wouldn't do with a *single*. This week we have sold the last of the original 1,000 pressing, so it's taken five months. We're re-releasing it in April."

Solomar is convinced record companies could drop their prices incredibly. Due to increased costs the next pressing of "Past And Parcel" will be £3.75. "But there will still be a difference of about a pound between ours and EMI's. It is very feasible to do it so cheaply."

The tightly structured music is hardly imitative or naive. By regulating distinctive influences — Love, Buckley, Reed and heavily discernible — alongside their own fully charged elegance the group achieves a music that is distinctly eclectic yet undeniably original and special.

It is very personal, uncommon music, irrengularly based with versatile, individual embellishments from Bisset-Smith's delicate, introverted lead and Prestbury's subtle, illuminative keyboards.

At the time of recording Solomar's voice was a little week but is now beginning to leave behind it Buckley taints and become eery and capable in its own way.

The very curios Objects sound is totally unlike anything else anybody else is doing. Two rag dolls on the cover with a six inch nail driven between their hands to crudely seal them together supplies a gentle symbolic clue to the nine songs subject matter.

Concerning his music, Solomar is objective; baffled about its obscurity without boasting.

"I think the album is really underestimated, "he reasonably concludes. "I feel the potential audience for Spherical Objects is quite huge. One thing this band has that most groups haven't is that there are definite 60s roots. There's no way we sound like a 60s group, but there area all sorts of thing that are subtly in there. A lot of other new bands that I really like have their roots in 76 and nothing in the 60s."

THE PASSAGE: Tony Friel, Dick Witts.

It's not hard to bracket Spherical Objects within the scope of Pere Ubu and Talking Heads once awkward prejudices have been discarded.

"Those groups rooted in 76 are conscious of working within a certain scene. Our songs reflect something far greater than that. Life in our times, whatever. Because even though a part of what I write is personal experience, a far great part is observer experience.

It's very difficult to control what you write in a number of ways. The most important thing is selecting what you've written. There's a certain area that philosophically or conceptually the group is working within — the album was centring on relationships between two people, the traditional relationships, the upward swing, the downward swing.

Other material that we have enough, for two more albums — shows us not necessarily concerned with relationships between two people, but with human relations and human behaviour. That's a central area our records will continue themtically."

Up to now Spherical Objects have remained stoically independent, but Solomar has no illusions about the ultimate need to join a record label for purely financial reasons, and paradoxically, because of the freedom such a coupling would offer; the records labels have the money, thus the power to promote, and that power will be directed out of basic greed as long as the companies organise and dilute the artists and not the other way round.

The musicians must have more say.

Solomar sees this latter object as possible if the records companies became saturated with confident, capable musicians who could alter the narrow mindedness.

What is needed is more and more groups cultivating a fresh commercial music that the labels cannot ignore, backed up with strength, honesty and intelligence.

"There's two sides to signing a deal. The main problem is finance. I don't see any reason why, if we had a deal retaining artistic control, we couldn't put out music exactly as we want, advertising it how we want. Buzzcocks are a shining example. I don't see any reason why we couldn't do exactly as we would by keeping our independence, but with the finance helping to promote us, to get us heard. *(Maybe this is why the major labels' albums cost more? — Hard Sums Ed.).*

Also on the next album it would be nicer to spend five days recording it, and with a deal we might be able to double that. The more time you have the more hold you have over your music.

"It's wholly financial really. There's no chance of us going professional if we ignore the major labels and stick with Object. For instance, I've got a nine to five job in an industry (Solomar is a computer analyst) I've been with for 12 years and, to put it mildly, I'm very fucked off with it.

I know the record business sucks, but I'm not disillusioned because I knew from the very beginning what it was like . . . but if we had control there would be no problem.

"I fully realise that if a company signed us they would attempt to push us in certain directions, but I think the sound that we make is commercial as it is without us having to compromise in any way."

The rest of the group fall in with Solomar's idealism.

Prestbury: "If you want to do anything constructive in music you've always got to stand closely by what you want as a band, and I'd rather have the whole thing explode and come to nothing than have to compromise. I am prepared to carry on until people become interested . . ."

Hilton: "Take a case like Steel Pulse: when they started they were really exciting but since joining Island they've been like a Radio 2 job . . . cassette in the car thing . . . nothing like the old band. And that's an example of what seems to happen to bands who sign to large labels."

Solomar: "It would be difficult for us to supply any freedom of choice in our current position, because record companies can obviously give a lot more promotion to their choice than we can to ours. But if we don't get a contract this year we will still release an album on Object in the autumn. We will carry on regardless."

A disciplined romantic, Solomar saw the possibilites of Object Music as an actual label, and not purely a temporary group vehicle, once all the hassles involved in recording the album had been overcome.

"I wouldn't have formed the label without having my band on it, because that initially gave the drive and the groundwork. But once that was done it just seemed logical.

"What I plan is for there to be quite a lot of releases on Object this year. We're planning releases by three Manchester bands — who'll get 50 per cent of profits after costs have been deducted. What will probably happen is that after a lot of activity on Object Music this year it will be either wound down to a large degree next year, or we'll stop production to concentrate on wherever Spherical Objects have reached at that time. It may be possibly kept over to release things I find interesting."

THE FIRST non-Spherical Object release on Object Music is the edgy, frantic four song ep "New Love Songs" from passionate experimental rock trio The Passage, who incorporate the economic, emotional aspects of rock, the harshly academic determination of experimental music plus the spontaneity and detail of jazz.

The trio consists of classically-trained percussionist Dick Witts, who spent three years with the Halle orchestra and who has played much experimental music, keyboardist Lol Hilton, and bassist Tony Friel — who contributed much to the early Fall sound.

"The same line-up as ELP "chuckles the effervescent, irrepressible Witts." It's extraordinary the number of people who come up to us and say that we really need a guitar ... who can't adjust to our sound."

Following the relentlessly intelligent and smilingly-opiniated Witts' trail to forming The Passage is curious and, in its way, complimentary to rock as a proper, positive 20th Century music of action and vigour.

Witts is totally classically orientated, from the orthodox to the avant-garde, progressively and experimentally inclined because "that's a defence you set up as a percussionist."

He'd been playing experimental music and becoming increasingly dissatisfied with its conventions and limitations.

"All the balls has gone out of it. It's not developing in any direction at all. Experimental music stagnated after the Second World War ... and what I wanted to do was something that was very direct. In experimental music you can play a piece that lasts 40 minutes and you ask people what they thought . . . y'know, you've been playing for 40 minutes, thinking all the time, creating, and they say oh yeah I really like that bit about two thirds in, that was really nice.

"Y'know there was no criteria ... you wanted to know something had happened. And you didn't. Whereas in rock, you know when you've played badly or well, or when it's working. So that's part of why rock appealed. The other part of it was, why deny tonality?.. why dent keys? What's happening in rock — even with Cabaret Voltaire or This Heat — is there's a kind of tonal basis to what they're doing, a key ... whilst experimental music had become obsessed with getting things down on paper ... it became very atomised.

"So why deny tonality. Let's use it in other ways; a progressive state of music. It's not that I'm particularly interested in music developing per se, just cos it needs to progress, because it seems that the role of the comtemporary composer is as a researcher to discover the marketable commodities of the future. That's something I'm against. What we've got to find is something that exists as a critique of existing society. Music is one way of doing that. Music is about time and energy. You don't play a piece of music and suddenly there's a revolution, but music is necessarily concerned with attitudes of mind and other possibilities of using time and energy.

"On that level we shouldn't be concerned with progress for its own sake. It should be geared to some social end. So that's why I became interested in rock. Like The Fall were doing some really interesting things."

But surely if there were some interesting things happening in rock, and its superficial purpose was attractive, there were equally fascinating things happening in experimental music. Both have their elements of stagnation and their positive elements.

"No no. There are possibilities in rock that haven't been tapped, avenues that I'd wanted to explore. Tony, coming from the other end, would probably say something else.

"Sure, Steve Beresford in experimental music is superb. He spreads across the whole range of music. One minute he'll be playing slinky ballads, the next minute something violent, then something else. What he's about — and this is very important — is change, continual change. I don't mean for the sake of it but for a particular social end.

"I like the idea of continual change because I don't want to see a society that is so formulated, so static, burocratic in that sense, but one that is continually revising, its forms and actions. There's a lot of change in a Passage set. There's lots of different things happening — music that goes from one extreme to another. My songs are experimentally based, and Tony's are rock based, but there's still a fluidity.

"Y'see, I first came into rock through David Bedford, who was an avant-garde composer who first got into rock by arranging things for Mike Oldfield. But if you've heard the stuff he did ... he took what seemed to me to be the most stupidly stagnant aspects of rock and he milked all the rest, and all you were left with was the most awful tepidity.

"It did nothing. I thought that was all wrong. There must be other possibilities. I thought this before forming The Passage, which is why I became interested in The Fall; the most important change was — chiche cliche — the Sex Pistols at the Lesser Free Trade Hall. I went because I'd read something John Peel said, that they were doing something completely new. And they were! There's a difference with what the Pistols did between *repetition* and *insistence;* in "Anarchy" the bass line and the melody are the same; they're parallel and the chords are parallel to the bass and thus the melody, and that's similar to 11th century Organum. What happened there was that there was a very firm Christian ideology being promoted by a bunch of hoodlum monks and the way they did it is a parallel insistence in music."

From all this — his own refined enthusiasm for the potential sounds of experimental music, Bedford's mistakes, the Pistols' impact, The Fall's strengths, rock's actual social justification and purpose — Witts arrived at The Passage.

It interesting that he should wish to play rock considering his background, and that he felt that there were definite aesthetic avenues to follow. As much proof than anything else of the actual purpose and success of the 75/76 turmoil, and how valid rock can be as a communicative social force.

TO THOSE who say this new underground lacks the fun, spirit, beat, and soda pop dressiness of what's accepted as rock'n'roll (still), or that the exponents are producing music that is at best a slightly idiosyncratic intrusion on rock's mainstream intrusion, I'd answer that The Passage, a trio making technically precise, theoretically sound classical rock music, are anything but difficult and dour.

Witts is aware that above all else rock should be dance music. The Passage are fast, furious, monochrome, simplistic, satirical as well as being decisive and suggestive.

The four tracks on the EP took three hours to record, and the group are slightly puzzled as to why it took so long.

There is nothing elaborate about them. They are a rock'n'roll group. But adventurous. And the opening line to the heavily heavily ironic anti-sexist "Love Song", *"I love you because you've got a cunt"*, is one of the most naturally funny things I've ever heard in rock. *(Bags I this one — Pseuds Corner Ed.)*

But if the new rock underground is exhaustively diverse and imaginative, not only does the industry ignore it, but also a large part of the rock audience, thanks to a number of preconceived and probably perfectly rational prejudices.

Something Spherical Objects' Steve Solomar said is apt here; "Ideas are sold to people, and ideas were sold to people very well in 1976, so that there was a very recognisable scene in 1977. Whereas now there's a very diverse and more interesting scene. And because it's more diverse it's much more difficult to sell to the mass audience. And there's also those people now who in ten years time will still identify themselves with being Sex Pistols fans, with being punks, in the same way that there are people who will forever be Grateful Dead fans, forever Beatles fans, forever Elvis fans. People who identify with that are and who will never move from it."

Rock today is a valuable combination of pop, avant-garde, theatre, discovery, classic 60s rock, punk — wildly eclectic and probing, but very little of it is overground.

Intuitive conservatism rules OK. Yet rock itself is innovating more than at any stage before — in its use of electronics, the scope of its lyrics, the extent of its ambition, the nature of its motivation, the strength of its overall content.

Rebel music still. Youth music still. Does anyone care?

Maybe it's not only conservatism but laziness too. We all complained a lot two years ago, got very excited, but now it's very easy to accept things served up for us when they are as attractive as Buzzcocks, Public Image, Clash. It's easy to avoid going out to look for music anymore. So whilst rock is vibrant and challenging, it appears dead, stale, because commercially it is.

Joy Division have been together two years. And after talking about the streamlined effectiveness of Spherical Objects and the cheerfully straightforward Passage, the Joy Division tale is pitiful and sorry.

None of the group has the articulation or assertion of a Witts or a Solomar; they've had to struggle spitefully to survive.

Their two-year development is a scruffy patchwork of naivity, mistakes, gullibility and indecision, yet — gloriously and significantly — their actual music has developed from clumsy three-chord exuburance into an open spatial rock sound that discreetly alters rock instruments' accepted roles in a subtly different, equally appetising way to that used by the Banshees or Public Image.

Their music is rhythmic and integrated, their songs sullen and angry. They're not sure why or how, they're very vague about musical development, its just something that instinctively happened. And it's happened totally isolated — "We never felt part of anything, except in the very early days."

Called Stiff Kittens during early rehearsals, they changed their name to Warsaw for their first performance — supporting Buzzcocks and Penetration at the Electric Circus on May 29, 1977. August the line-up settled on Bernard Albrecht (guitar), Stephen Morris (drums) Peter Hook (bass) and Ian Curtis (voice).

The painfully nervous Curtis (in total contrast to his absolutely demonic stage antics) falteringly recalls the naivity and numbness of those early days:

"We were just learning how to play, really. At the time it was just, aw, we're doing it, we couldn't believe it, really we didn't think about it. It was just great to be doing it. None of us had ever been in a group before."

Romance that was quickly to be crushed.

By the end of '77 the quartet changed their name, thanks to the temporary Warsaw Pakt, and considered their material good enough to record. About this time they contributed to the Electric Circus shutdown festivities, an example of their early muddy riff routines, "At A Later Date", turning up on the commemorative "Short Circuit" biscuit after some typical confusion and unsureness.

"We didn't even know we'd been recorded, and in the end we chose the wrong track to put on the record. Royalty wise, I think we owe Virgin."

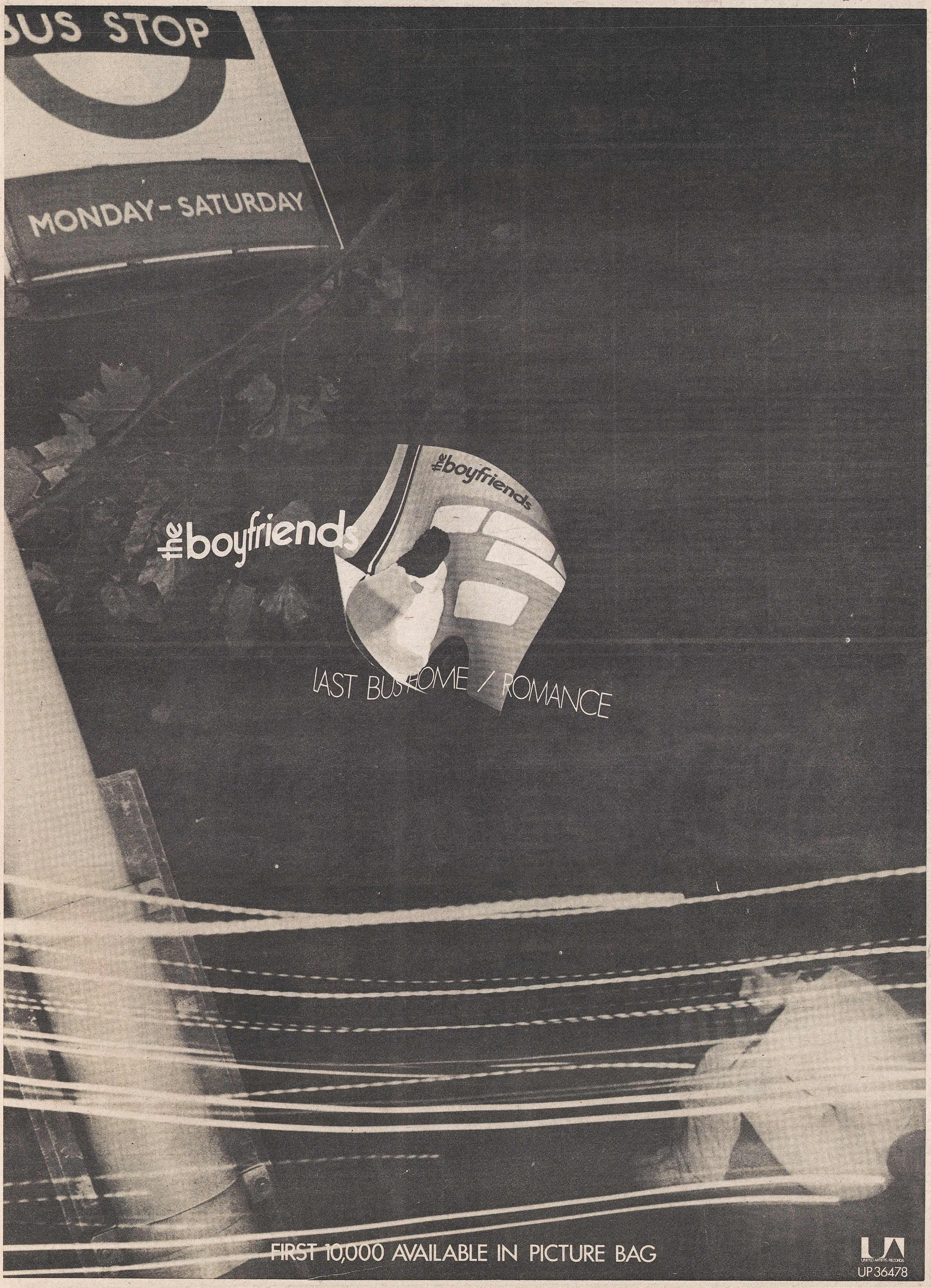
Managerless and clueless, they blindly set about making their own record. A certain studio seductively offered to record, press, engineer and label it for them, and greedily they accepted.

Dismay when they heard the queazy quality of the sound ... and they decided not to release.

A handful of cold gigs broke them into 1978 ... "Material wise, everything seemed to be clicking into place. But at that time we felt very detached from things. No-one was helping us. It was very disillusioning, but in fact it urged us to carry on ... sort of 'we'll show them' ".

Their early blunders were totally their fault. They were inordinately stupid. Even at

■ *Continued on page 37*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THRILLS

"Mora! Mora! Mora!"

ELVIS ARRESTED IN JAPANESE PUBLICITY STUNT

NOTCH UP another first for wily Jake Riviera and his squinting protegee Elvis Costello . . . *Thrills* presents the proof that when it comes to publicity stunts, these boys can lick the lot.

Our pix show what went on last November when Elvis went shopping for trinkets down Tokyo's main drag, Ginza Street. Rather than merely picking up souvenirs like any normal western rock star, Costello decided to do something for the Japs in return — so he and his Attractions turned up on a lorry, tuned up and ready to go, and hammered out a free and furious set of venomous rock'n'roll. Featured classics naturally included Costello's best known songs, such as "Ripstick Vogue" and "Ladio Ladio".

This is what we journalists call Ye Olde Flatbed Truck Stunte.

Not content with using this tried and tested old favourite, Elvis then went on to perform Ye Olde Publicke Arreste Stunte. After exhibiting himself to the astounded populace throughout Ginza Street, Costello managed to attract the attention of a passing policeman, who arrested him and fined him 4,000 yen (about £10) on the spot for making a noise in the street.

Incidentally, the highly enviable fab gear sported by Costello and cohorts, fashion fans, is actually regulation Japanese high school uniform. Beats caps 'n' blazers anyday, huh?

Incidentally (revisited), the sign on Elvis' truck reads: "Elvis Costello is now touring Japan". Whcih he was. He and the Attractions did five dates in Tokyo and Osaka, becoming the first new wave artists (remember them?) to visit Japan and also the first visiting western musicians to play small clubs instead of large halls.

Elvis went down a storm with punters and police alike, despite adamantly refusing to do interviews or have his picture took.

"If Bob Dylan did it," he said, "then I can do it too."

Just as long as they don't do it together.

HARUKO MINAKAMI

THRILLS

Above: note Japanese policeman using a Japanese phone in Japanese police box with honourable Japanese wanted posters on wall. Elvis notes cameraman. Pix: MASASKI KUWAMOTO

THE AWFUL POWER OF ROCK'N'ROLL

BEEN FEELING clapped-out lately? Noticed how those marvellously skilled rolling fingers, usually so adept at extracting the papers from the slim red packet, have lost their grip? How the labial organ, usually so generous with its bounty of fresh-garnered saliva, now utterly fails to cut its licks? You, friend are suffering from fatigue — a deadly tiredness induced, according to a US behavioural scientist, by, yes, listening to that dratted "Beat" music.

The Yankee boffin in question is Dr. John Diamond, who may or may not be related to the well-known crooner of the same surname, but who undoubtedly is the president of the US Institute of Preventive Medicine (former pres. Hugo Hackenbushe). After the conclusion of a two-year experiment, in which thousands of people had their muscles wired up to various machines and were then subjected to rock records, Dr Diamond has now announced that rock music "frequently causes all the muscles in the body to go weak".

All the muscles? At press time *Thrills* attempted to ascertain whether or not Dr Diamond had taken readings from male guinea-pigs' phalluses — it being the theory round here, you understand, that rock-produced debilitation is confronted by at least one no-go area — but with little success. We couldn't find his phone number.

However, on the face of it the theory seems plausible enough. Diamond reckons that the fierce 4/4 "beat" featured so heavily by most "rock" music brings on a subconscious physical commitment to the domineering pulse, with a resultant slavish starting-up and shutting-down of muscular activity — even when sitting apparently still. It is, he claims, this constant drain on muscular reserves which drains energy, by up to 70 per cent. Whereas "classical music" (whatever that may be), with its contrasting emphasis on melody and tonality rather than rhythm — and its variability of the latter — actually improves health and vitality.

But perhaps his most interesting side-theory is that certain musical notes have the power, in themselves, to vitalise or debilitate. Middle C is apparently the worst offender. "I strapped a patient into a chair and played him a C all night, at a fairly low volume says the professor. "In the morning he was stiff as a board. This proves my theory, though at terrible cost."

SIMPLE PETER

THRILLS

Weak-kneed Rockers

From PHILIP FINN in New York

ROCK music can make you weak but listen to some soothing classical music and you could get stronger.

Rock group Queen . . . 'Their songs can make you weak.'

How you can test the doctor's theory yourself

DR DIAMOND says any C note is debilitating and he has required to accompany a strong deltoid muscle in an adult male to about 40 lbs. When rock music is played only 10 lbs is required.

One reason for this, he says, is that the beat is stopping at the end of each bar of music is out and

with his right arm relaxed at his side, and his left arm held straight

to try to push his arm down as he resists with all his strength.

Secrets

The Daily Mail breaks the horrific story

. . . AND HOW TO USE IT TO BEST EFFECT

MEANWHILE a mathematician now claims to have discovered the precise relationship of musical notes that makes the difference between good and bad music.

Professor Richard Voss of the IBM Research Centre, who has analysed many differing types of music from Bartok to the Blue Oyster Cult, claims that certain note sequences which he dubs "one over" sequences, provide exactly the right balance between predictability and surprise — the two elements he considers the hallmark of all good music.

These "one over" sequences also occur in natural sounds from surf crashing on a shore to the roaring of flood water, and, surprisingly, in the sound of motorway traffic.

Professor Voss, speaking at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, said he believes that music imitates our basic subconscious longing to observe the process of change. He claims that successful composers have subconsciously discovered these subtle sequences and used them so that, although the listener expects the climax, he or she always remains surprised by it.

DICK TRACY

THRILLS

The Lone Groover

BENYON

IS IT TRUE Y'RE RETIRIN', EL GROANO?
HA! RUMOURS, RUMOURS!
-I'LL KEEP GOIN' ..... AS LONG AS TH' KIDS WANT T'COME AN' SEE ME.....
SO WE CAN QUOTE YOU AS SAYIN' YOU ARE RETIRIN'...?

DANGEROUS VISIONS

Ben Grimm delivers his verdict on the Hulk TV SHOW. Copyright Marvel Comics — as is the page reproduced below.

WHAT'S BIG AND GREEN AND DRIVES UP RATINGS?

■ HERE HE COMES NOW!!

MEET DR DAVID Bruce Banner. Hitch-hiking into yet another town with his aliases, his nervous, ingratiating smile, his immaculately layered, razor-cut hair, his endless supply of lumberjack shirts and flared jeans (tucked into a veritable Pandora's Box of an overnight bag), his propensity for befriending small children, dying lady scientists and other appealing unfortunates . . . it'd almost be just another soap opera if Banner didn't turn big and green and aggressive and terminally D-U-M-B at least twice per show.

Banner, you see, was spurred on by the death of his wife to conduct experimentation which resulted in a change in his body chemistry. This periodically transforms him into the creature known as The (Incredible) Hulk. Since Banner was presumed to have died in the explosion which destroyed his lab when his experiments went BLAAAAAAMMM, he has to keep moving, like Kimball in *The Fugitive* or Ben Gazzara in that old show about the geezer who only has a year to live. So he schleps from place to place, searching for a cure for his somewhat unusual ailment, and though he never finds it, he usually contrives to cast a little ray of sunshine into the beleaguered lives of the folks he encounters.

These adventures are depicted in a television series produced by Universal Studios in the States and shown there on CBS-TV and here on London Weekend.

■ WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

MEET DR *ROBERT* Bruce Banner. In 1962, Banner was working at a United States Air Force missile base somewhere in the deserts of Nevada. While conducting a test on an experimental gamma bomb designed to put America ahead in the Cold War, he was shocked to observe during the countdown that a punk hotrodder had driven his jalopy right into the rest area. Ordering his assistant to halt the countdown, Banner ran towards the car to get the kid to safety. However, his assistant was a Soviet double agent and seized the opportunity by *not* delaying the countdown, hoping to eliminate America's most eminent nuclear physicist by trapping him in the blast. Banner got the hotrodder — Rick Jones by name — to safety, but was exposed to a theoretically lethal dose of gamma radiation. He didn't die— but he found himself periodically transformed into a big green berserker soon to be known as The (Incredible) Hulk.

From then on, he led a double life at the Air Force base, attempting to carry out his duties as Banner despite the fact that the megalomaniac superpatriot in charge — General Theodore "Thunderbolt" Ross, father of Banner's fiancee — was convinced that Banner was at the very least a traitor and at worst the accomplice of The Hulk. Eventually, the secret of Banner's dual identity was discovered and now the base is devoted to devising cures for Banner's condition. The Hulk — though not exactly the world's brightest inhabitant — is basically a nice person if treated considerably, and — both solo and in uneasy alliance with Dr Strange and others in an informal union known as The Defenders — has been known to save the world when not terrorising it.

These adventures are depicted in *The Incredible Hulk*, *The Defenders* and various other comic books published by the Marvel Comics Group, overseen by publisher Stan Lee, who created the Hulk in the early '60s in collaboration with artist Jack Kirby.

■ YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE

ON TELEVISION, Banner is portrayed by Bill Bixby. Banner is the hero of the series, and apart from his Hulkness, he is a standard liberal American hero. The Hulk is portrayed by Lou Ferrigno. and he is an inarticulate brute: destruction personified. His brain holds just enough water to enable him to have a rough idea of who he is supposed to be pulverising and who he is supposed to be rescuing. His dialogue is limited to a distorted varispeed "GRRRRAAAAGGGGHHHH" and, TV budgets being limited, he is onscreen for about ten minutes of each hour-long show.

In the comics, The Hulk is the star of the show. Banner generally wakes up beaten to a pulp in whatever godawful location The Hulk has dumped him in, clad only in a pair of tattered purple pants and thoroughly miserable and confused. He has no semblance of a "normal life" and spends most of his conscious hours in the Gamma Base lab. Several times he has actually discovered a cure for his condition, but has had to sacrifice his future by voluntarily reverting to The Hulk in order to save his friends from some fate even worse than ol' greenskin. The comics place him in a dizzying variety of settings.

The TV Banner (let us differentiate the two by calling them "David" and "Bruce") generally recovers from his transformations by sauntering back into the principal locale without a hair out of place, clad in yet another jeans-and-shirt outfit (where do they all *come* from, f'Chrissake?) just in time for people to tell him that he missed all the excitement. In between times, he dodges an investigative reporter who is following The Hulk around and thinks that Banner is dead.

■ A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND IN DEBT

UNIVERSAL Studios, apparently, are unwilling to insult the intelligence of the American viewing public by presenting them with a show that is "too comic-bookish". Therefore, they boil the entire Hulk saga down to one basic plot which is similar enough to any other TV show not to upset anyone, and run variations thereof each week. Don't get me wrong: *The Incredible Hulk* is, with the exception of *The Dain Curse* (you did see *The Dain Curse*, didn't you? Good) the best US TV import of the year, but the plots are mostly from hunger. I only watch it to see Lou Ferrigno go "GRRRAAAAGGHHHHH' and chuck things and people about in slow motion. Howcum he doesn't talk like the Hulk I grew up with? What happened to classic lines like "Guns! Guns! Guns! Why must Hulk always be followed by puny humans with guns?", "Hulk mad! The madder Hulk get, the stronger Hulk get!" or — best of all — "HULK SMASH!"

How naive of me. That's "too comic-booky".

Stan Lee, the Hulk's onlie begetter, made his views known thusly:

"Naturally, I'd be happier if the shows (Lee refers not only to *The Hulk* but also to CBS' other Marvel show, *Spider-Man*, which has not yet reached UK screens) hewed closer to our original story-line and yet I'm aware of the reasons which caused the networks and the producers to make so many changes . . . (they) were made in an effort to mould the shows closer to the format of most other TV mystery and action dramas. My own personal feeling is that it would be better to take the opposite approach and make them as different as possible."

■ I DON'T WANNA BE NICE

AND THEREIN lies the rub. The American TV system would regard it as an insult to the intelligence of their public to give them an authentic Hulk, but not an insult to intelligence to give them a rerun of *The Fugitive* with periodic cameos by a big green monster.

Marvel's final comment on the TV show was a recent issue of *Marvel Two-In-One* in which Bruce Banner sees an excerpt from a Hulk TV show in a shop-window and gets so enraged ("They've turned my tragedy into some kind of soap opera . . . My God, have they no decency?") that he turns into Hulk and thooms off to Hollywood to smash up the studio. He and The Thing eventually end up saving the studio from some calamity or other, but his parting shot to the producers is: "Just be sure that Hulk does not look so stupid, or Hulk will be *back!*"

Right on. Hulk does not understand TV mentality. Hulk is confused, and when Hulk gets confused, Hulk gets mad, and when Hulk gets mad . . .

HULK SMASH! Right, Lou?

CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY

THRILLS

THE NEVADA DESERT IS COLD THIS STARRY NIGHT, AS A SLIGHT, SHIVERING FIGURE TROGGES WEARILY INTO THE SLEEPY LITTLE TOWN.
SMALLVALE POP. 549
THE STRANGER SEEKS NO MORE THAN SHELTER FROM THE STINGING WIND... AND ESCAPE FROM THE NIGHTMARE HIS LIFE HAS BECOME!
JUST MY LUCK! THE HULK TAKES AN EVENING NAP IN THE DESERT, AND BRUCE BANNER WAKES UP IN HIS PLACE— HALF-FROZEN TO DEATH, NO LESS!
I'VE GOT TO KEEP MOVING... THERE MUST BE A ROOMING HOUSE SOMEWHERE IN TOWN.
BUT WITHIN A BLOCK THE TORTURED SCIENTIST DISCOVERS...
NEXT WEEK ...ON "THE INCREDIBLE HULK"...
WHAT?!
NOW... NOW THEY'VE TURNED MY TRAGEDY INTO SOME SORT OF... OF SOAP OPERA? MY GOD, HAVE THEY NO DECENCY??
NO RESPECT FOR PRIVACY? NO... NO...
...TRANSFORMING HIM ONCE AGAIN INTO THE MOST INCREDIBLE MAN-MONSTER OF ALL!
NO! THAT IS NOT THE HULK!
HULK IS NOT ON ANY TV SHOW... HULK IS HERE!!
WHO IS MAKING FUN OF THE HULK THIS WAY?!
...FILMED AT MIRACLE STUDIOS IN HOLLYWOOD!
ROUSED BY RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION, BANNER'S BODY CHEMISTRY TWISTS... MUTATES...

"We give up — what IS big and green and drives up ratings?"

BLACKMAIL CORNER

IT WAS a normal Monday morning at the *NME* — the editor sat cradling his marbles as the staff stared glaze-eyed at their silent typewriters. In the reception area, Danny 'Wotcha Guv!' Baker dozed fretfully.

Suddenly the air of tense tranquility and stale cigarette smoke was cut by the swing doors swinging open. They slammed shut *(Get on with it. — Ed.)* and there stood a strange, stooped figure, Was it Bernard Rhodes, the man from the Pru or just Bob Woffinden delivering late copy again?

"Dunno me old china," chirped Mrs Baker's boy. "'E just dopped this 'ere pitcher on the old table and drew a big 'Z' on the wall over there, like, cor blimey, know what I mean?"

As Danny returned to his business — wiping his sleeve on his nose and dunking custard creams in his Horlicks — close inspection of the photograph (left) revealed the phisogs of a stunningly attractive group of young men known collectively as Rusty Butler — one of whom is now a Major Punk Rock Tsar.

Now, they may look like a bunch of Village People to you sunshine, but we've got proof that they're real men. Give in? Take a gander at the one on the right (the one doing a fair approximation of Mick Box in drag) — would you believe, er, Dave Greenfield, The Stranglers' Semprini?

No? Well Bernard White — for it was he who was the informant — swears on his Rusty Butler collection that it is so. But who the hell is/was Rusty Butler when he's at home?

Don't expect any glib answers from 'Tuff' Hugh Cornwell — he's just spilled the beans to Jap mag *Jam*. As can be deduced from the pic (right) he's still a mean mutha, savagely licking a baby-faced choc-ice to death.

Ooooh — makes you fair shiver, doesn't he?

TONY FELLATIO

THRILLS

DON'T PUBLISH — AND BE DAMNED?

NO DOUBT you've noticed, circling the label border of every record in your collection, the words "All rights of the manufacturer and of the owner of the recorded work reserved". Sounds good, but what does it mean?

It means, effectively, that every time a record is 'performed' — usually on the radio — a royalty has to be paid to the songwriter. This royalty collected by the Performing Rights Society, whose job it is to pay out to their member songwriters.

But membership of the PRS is select, based on the economics of collecting royalties for a particular songwriter.

Because of this, it's unlikely that a little-known band on a small label will be able to register their songs. No problem if the only person likely to play the record is John Peel — you simply inform the programme secretary of the details, and request payment. The trouble starts when any one of a dozen or more radio shows is likely to play it — that could add up to many hours glued hopefully to the tranny.

The one recourse up till now has been to use a publisher who is a member of the PRS, and get the royalties through that organisation's complicated collection machinery. Publishers ask for a 50 per cent cut (the legally prescribed maximum) of what just might turn out to be a handsome sum, and may involve you in all manner of contractual ties for anything up to four years.

But an alternative service has just been set up by one Clive Solomon, author of the book *Record Hits* and manager of The V.I.P.'s — who had to deal with this murky side of the record business when releasing their "Music For Funsters" EP last year. His experiences then showed him, he says, that a service is needed to help out do-it-yourself independent labels/groups.

He is offering one-off song by song publishing deals with his PRS-registered company, at royalty rates he claims are substantially better than 50 per cent rate that most publishing companies have adopted as standard.

As always, the only thing you need then to make it all worthwhile is that elusive hit. Meanwhile more info can be had from Clive Solomon at 41, Alderbrook Road, Clapham South, London SW12.

PAUL RAMBALI

THRILLS

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By A. J. McILROY in Nairobi

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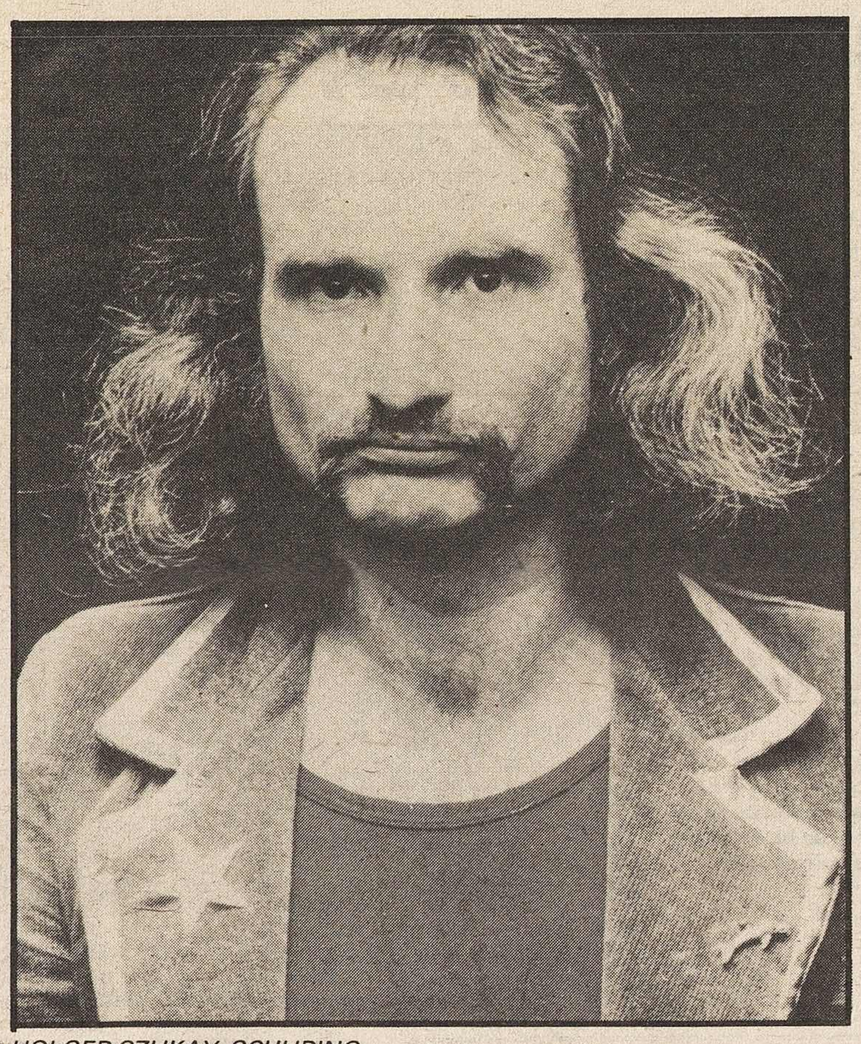
LAST BEAN BAILS OUT OF CAN



HOLGER CZUKAY SCHURING

BAD NEWS. Can, that most interesting and innovative of continental bands, either can't or won't anymore, and have apparently suspended all collective operations indefinitely.

At least, so says Holger Czukay/Schuring, who spent most of Christmas week longshanking the streets of London town in search of a record company (are you tuning in, Radar?) ready and willing to release his "Hollywood Symphony" solo album.

The past few years have seen Can weather personal and professional storms with distinctly mixed results. Their contract with Virgin, instigated in '75 with "Landed" and terminated in '77 with "Saw Delight", rarely seemed to satisfy both them and the company at any one time.

Can, understandably but unrealistically, remained aloof from the promotional process, valuing privacy over publicity.

At the same time, perhaps encouraged by the surprising single success of "I Want More" in '76, they attempted rather hesitantly and nebulously to coin a more extrovert, accessible, 'populist' currency (best exemplified by parts of "Flow Motion"): an experiment that ultimately failed to convince. Old Can fans were mildly disillusioned, new Can fans simply weren't secured.

In addition, contentious shuffling in the rhythm section — Schuring eventually being replaced by ex-Traffickers Rosko Gee and Rebop Kwaku Bah — further unbalanced band equilibrium. Both "Saw Delight" and "Out Of Reach", the first fruit of a contract with Lightning and an all too appropriate title, swung the Canometer with alarming lethargy and, worse still, a near-total lack of mysterioso travelling.

As it happens, another album, "Can Can", was recorded last year and awaits release; it's reportedly something of an improvement over its immediate predecessors, but no-one in the Can camp appears over-eager to put it to public test.

Meanwhile, pianist Irmin Schmidt has resorted (or returned) to making film soundtracks and intends at some point to produce a purely electronic album, drummer Jackie Liebezeit is playing occasional sessions and guitarist Michael Karoli has moved from Cologne to the South of France where, with the help of Schmidt, he plans to build a small studio and record on his own.

Schuring himself worked on "Hollywood Symphony" for 15 months at Can's Inner Space Studios and these ears have it firmly pinned as the finest and Canniest achievement from any of the band since "Soon Over Babuluma" or "Future Days". If released, the album would be paradise regained for long-suffering Cansters.

"Hollywood Symphony" comprises four pieces, all of them almost entirely performed by Schuring, and it demonstrates the possibilities inherent in his decidedly different recording routines.

In his last days on stage and on record with Can, Schuring exchanged his bass for a small spacecraft's small flight deck's worth of tapes, tape machines and short-wave radios, these usually festooned with unseasonal Christmas lights.

The prime premise of this paraphernalia was to allow Schuring to procure and process random tape commentaries on what the rest of Can were (or were not) playing and interject these into the live mix — and this he duly did, with results as often hilarious as haunting or hazardous: molten concrete music.

And so it's no surprise that "Hollywood Symphony" is similarly chuffed and chocked with odd, alien even, tape and radio encounters. Schuring holds that we are "never alone — there are always these waves of radio information around and about us, if only we could hear and catch them. We are always . . . international."

Which is why a deceptively direct 'disco' flirt like "Cool In The Pool" almost threatens to dematerialise delightfully under the pressure of French horn parts culled by Schuring early one morning from the Paris equivalent of our own Light Programme and erratically abandoned into the flux and flow.

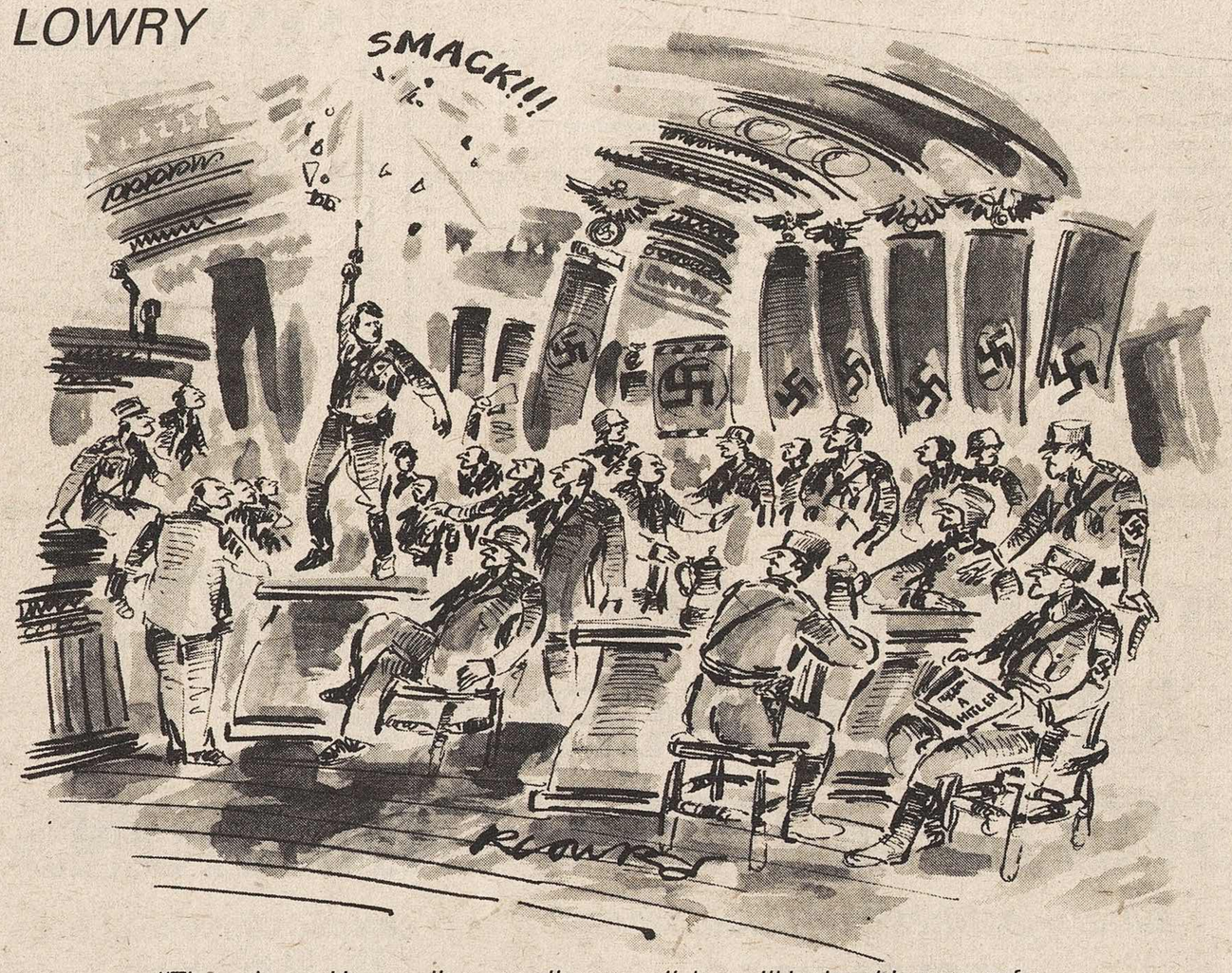
Which is why "Persian Law", an emotive polyphonic tone poem featuring Schuring, who was trained as a classical guitarist, on transcendentally crystalline Stratocaster, includes the voice of an Iranian poet reciting verses on Tehran Radio. The juxtaposition of Western and Eastern forms is so unlikely that it succeeds.

The rest of "Hollywood Symphony" might as well wait until it's most widely available. So — there's Can, now adrift and AWOL, there's Holger Schuring, never a man or musician to do the standing still, and here's hoping on their and his behalf.

ANGUS MacKINNON

THRILLS

LOWRY



"The pubs and beer cellars are all very well, but will he be able to transfer his act to the big halls and outdoor venues?"

Who didn't spot the Xmas deliberate mistake, then?

HI GIRLS!!! Now you know we don't need a good excuse to print a pic of the world's dishiest box office draw, do we? And here's an especially yummy snap for your scrap books. Who is it?

It's John Travolta, you gasp. Isn't it?

No! Actually the gent looming large and luvly before your delighted peepers is none other than British born Tim Sparks, who looks so much like the star of *Saturday Night Fever* and *Grease* that when we ran this shot in our zappy Christmas ish *none* of you, not even Danny Baker, sussed that there was something amiss and wrote in to tell us. Fooled you all, so there.

Bright spark Tim, 21, hails from heady Hillingdon in Middlesex. He's an export shipping controller by day and by night he . . . aah, that would be telling.

But this Travolta lookalike delivers more than meets the eye. He's not just a pretty clone. Already millions have swooned at the sight of Tim surrounded by bevies of gorgeous gals in the nation's top papers — *Daily Mirror, My Guy, Girl About Town* and *The Scottish Daily Record*, no less.

It all started when an advertising agency ran a campaign to find a Travolta double for a money spinning enterprise. Needless to say, they didn't look further than young Tim. Already the boy is hot property with a cameo part in up coming movie *The Curse Of Tutankhamen* and a two page feature in *Woman* magazine.

The only stumbling block between Tim and muchos dineros is none other than that Antipodean stig in the wood, RSO himself. When *Grease* opened in London (for the second time), RSO were dismayed to find that Sparks intended to attend the reception at the American Embassy and switched venues to the Lyceum to avoid him — or so says his publicist.

But has all this success gone to Tim's head? Of course — though he still works at the factory. Seems the other guys there are content to pull his leg while the gals in the pool just wanna pull. Geddit, geddit!!

No dice there unfortunately — Tim is happily married. In the meantime he's getting used to the autograph hounds and preparing to launch his very own singing career with . . . what else — a disco ditty. All together now: "He's the one that we want, wooh, wooh, wooh" . . . Oh yes indeed.

OLIVER NEWTON CLONE

THRILLS

ROBERT JOHN TRAVOLTA and (inset) DAVID JOHN TRAVOLTA. Can you tell the difference? Of course — the one on the left's the real McCoy. Bruce McCoy. The other one's Tony Parsons.

THE END

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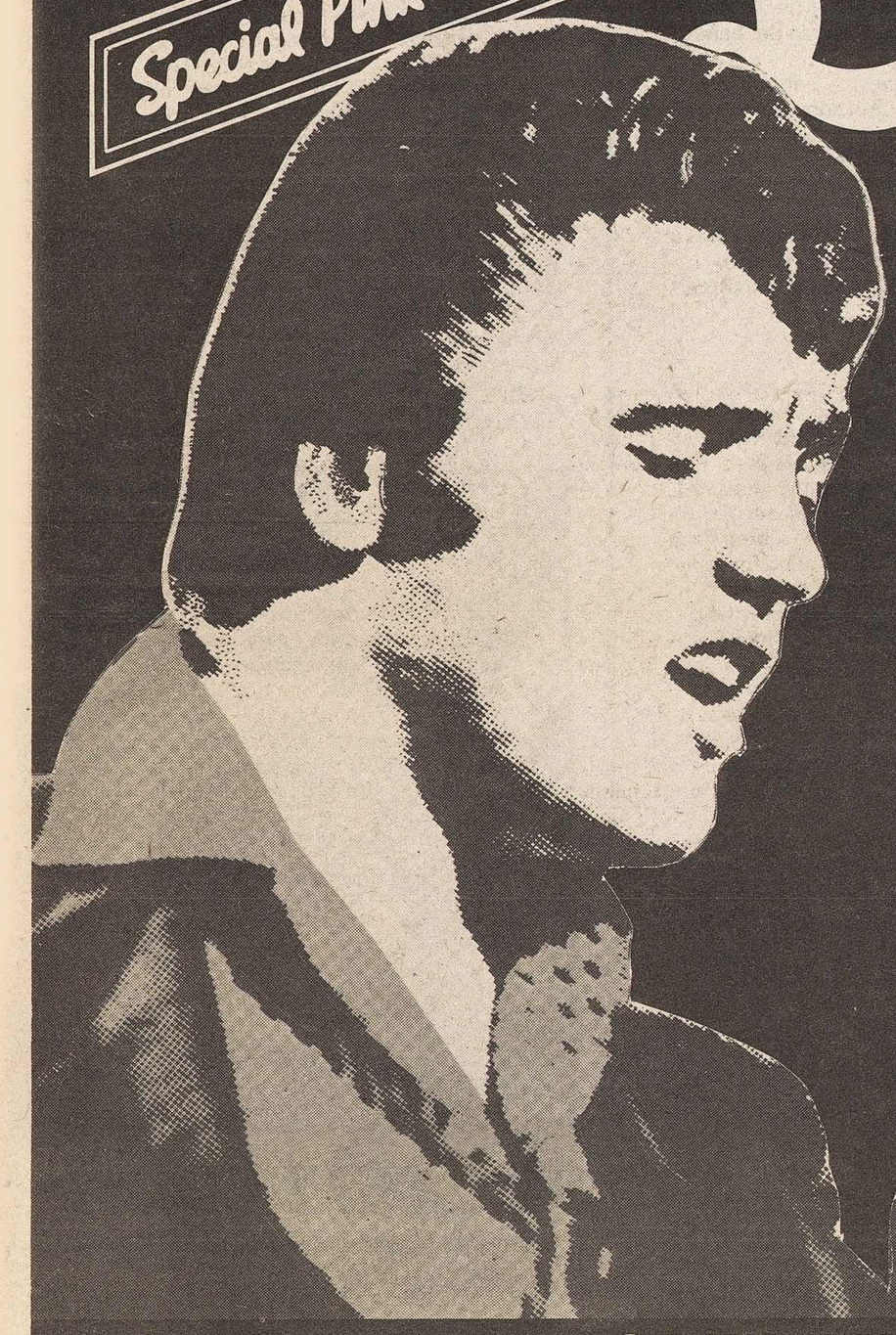

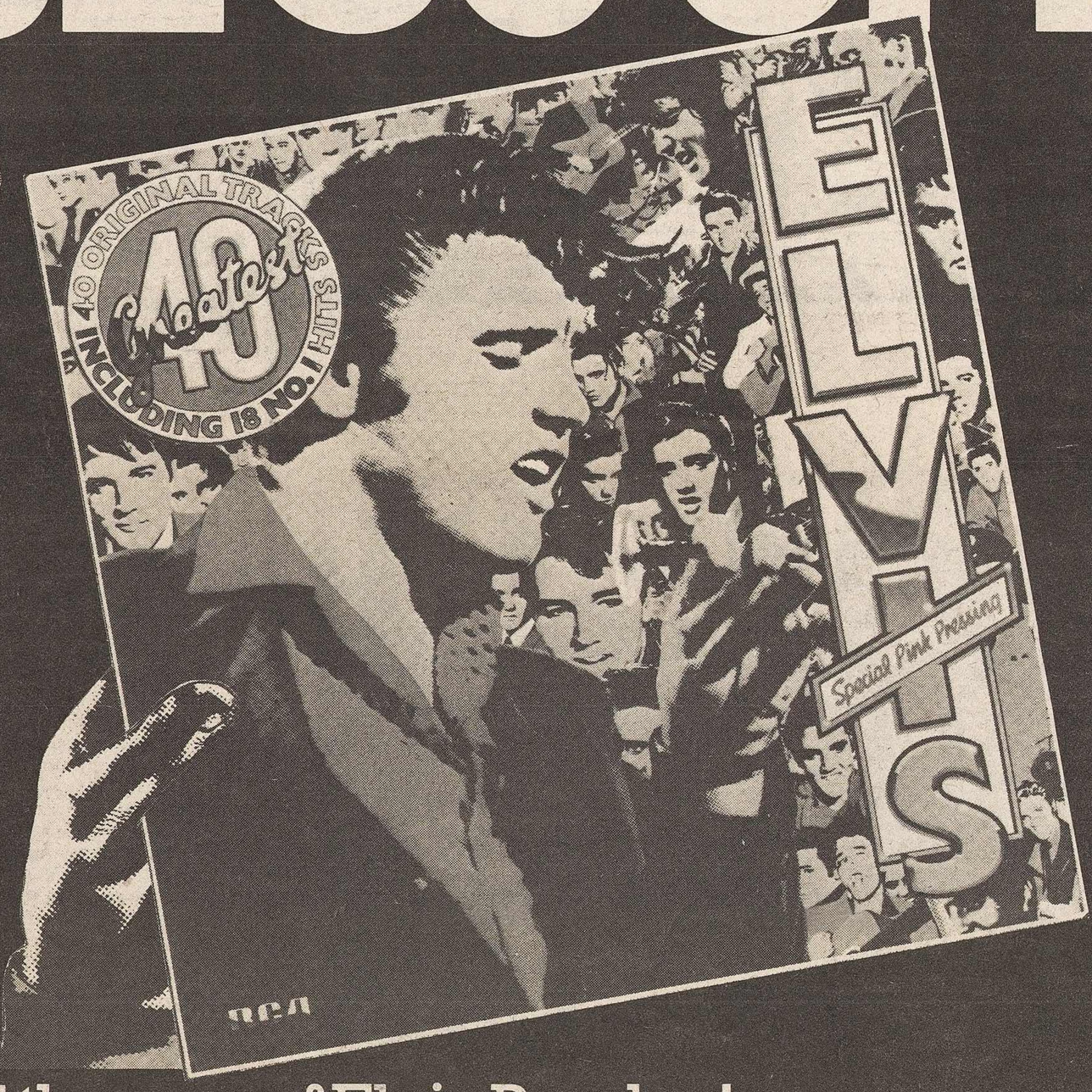

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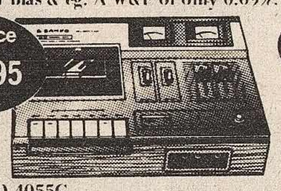

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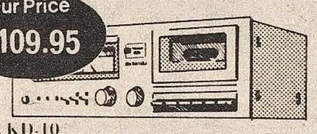

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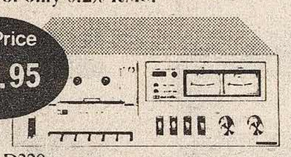

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BLOCKHEAD

A Guided Tour Of Here And Now

Also starring The Table, The Fall, The Flu And The Bus That Wouldn't Start.
By GRAHAM LOCK

■ There's No Biz Like Show Biz

LIVERPOOL, December 3. I'm sitting in a car with The Table. The group's co-founder Tony Barnes is talking about record companies.

"We've had record companies, when it was in fashion to be beaten up, saying, 'Why don't you get beaten up lads?' Literally. I mean, we're normal people, we're not going that crazy to make it. When somebody says that to you, you just think, 'Good God, what the hell are these people on about?' "

Bolton, December 4. I'm sitting in a bus with Here And Now. Bassist Keith Da Missile Base is talking about promoters' response to the band's 'free gig' policy.

"There are certain agencies. . .I don't think we better mention them. . .but somebody beginning with B phoned up Central London Poly and warned them about the Here And Now band saying, you know, 'Look out, this bunch are a really heavy bunch of geezers, I wouldn't book them if I were you' etcetera. And there is a little of that flying around, mainly because they're a bit paranoid — they take us as a threat to their livelihood."

■ So This Is Real Life?

THE NIGHT I join the Here And Now free tour in Manchester, their bus breaks down; there's a row between the band and the roadies; and a row between members of the band in which a cup is thrown and a woman flees into the night crying.

We spend half the night pushing the bus up and down a grimy Manchester back street, and the other half squashed up on the bus holding post-mortems on the rows.

The bus is home for the Here And Now entourage. A red single decker, converted to include a kitchen unit, seats and bunks, it sleeps two babies, a dog and around fifteen adults. Water has to be fetched daily. A single electric fire provides heat.

Two days on the bus and I'm groggy with flu. Everyone else has, or has had, the flu. It's hard to get to sleep, what with the babies crying, the flu-ridden adults coughing and the healthy ones snoring, so most people don't get up again until the middle of the afternoon.

The next day is Sunday. We have to get from Manchester to Liverpool and the bus won't start. We try pushing it again. No good. Someone phones a garage, and later a guy turns up in a breakdown van. He's not a real mechanic, he explains, just the man who looks after the garage on Sundays.

The first thing he does is to tow the bus onto some wasteground, where it gets stuck in the mud. We all clamber out and push it back onto the road. Then we discover the breakdown van is stuck, so we have to push that too. Then, us pushing and him towing, we go up and down the same grimy backstreet while the afternoon gets darker and darker. Not a cough from the engine, but plenty from the rest of us. The man from the garage gives up; he'll send a mechanic around at eight in the morning, he says, and drives off for his tea.

So we catch a train to Liverpool, where it's pouring with rain, and have to ride back in the equipment truck, band, roadies, fans and gear scrambled in the back. Here, Keith Da Missile Base tells me about God.

He's been in the band a while, has Keith. Must've been, cos he's left twice already. Why, I ask.

"I'm older than the rest of 'em — 27 — and I tended to get left with all the organisational work on tour. Well, it was too much, what with playing as well. The others seemed to think that because they were doing the right thing, with the right attitudes, then God would provide. Well, God did provide, but he was working through me."

Keith and drummer Kif Kif Le Batter do most of the talking for Here And Now. They're also polar opposites on the albeit small spectrum of the band's corporate political outlook — Keith is caustic, pragmatic; Kif Kif earnest, idealistic (he's also left the band previously — because they were too commercial!).

The stock response to Here And Now is: "Oh yeah, they're just a bunch of old hippies." Talk to Keith and that's rubbish. Talk to Kif Kif and you begin to wonder.

On the train down to Liverpool, I ask Kif Kif the big question. Why do you do free gigs?

Kif Kif considers. His face creases up in evidence of intellectual effort. Finally he speaks. "I'm not sure if I can really explain it to you, man. I don't know where your head is."

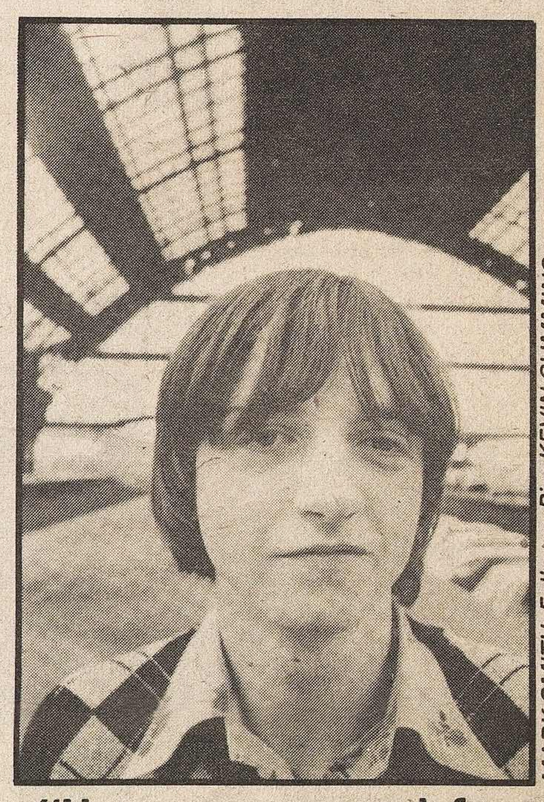
It's on top of my neck, man, as per usual. But I don't say this. I just look at him expectantly, and Kif Kif tries again.

"You know the yin-yang symbol? Well, I see that as applying to the state of the world. And, like, until recently each half was taking from the other half, grabbing and snatching" — here Kif Kif claws the air expressively — "but now there's a change, and each half is giving to the other half instead. And doing free gigs is, like, part of that change."

Oh. I have to admit I'm disappointed with this answer. It sounds like a load of horseshit.

Keith's reply is: "Why free gigs? To cut out all the big business stuff that comes between people and bands, who're after all" — sarcastic grimace — "supposed to be representative of the people. How about that?" Yeah. That makes more sense to me and my vulgar materialism.

The mechanic doesn't turn up at eight the next morning. Nor nine. Nor ten. At eleven someone bravely gets up and phones the garage. It transpires the mechanic was injured in a car crash the previous evening; but a replacement is promised shortly. Amazingly, he turns up *and* proves efficient. One more push and tow session, and the bus splutters into life. In Exeter, Kif Kif tells me, the bus got a tow from a



MARK SMITH, Fall guy. Pic: KEVIN CUMMINS.

"How can you work for nothing? It's economically impossible. We're working lads . . ."
Mark Smith, The Fall

madman on a tractor. The motto for this tour should be: You're either on the bus, or you're pushing it.

■ Would You Buy A Free Gig From These People?

THIS IS a strange situation. I didn't talk to Here and Now because I liked their music — I'd barely heard it — but because I was intrigued by their free tours. I wanted to find out why and how they did free gigs, and spread the information. After all, it seemed like an idea worth encouraging. And if I liked their music, too — well, that was a bonus.

But I didn't like their music. Not at all. Apart from Keith and Kif Kif, the group comprises Gavin Da Blitz on synthesiser and Steffy Sharpstrings on guitar, while Annie Wombat and Suze De Blooze provide backing vocals and arty dancing. To these ears, they produce bland, soggy instrumentals interspersed with silly, moralistic lyrics of the "what you see is what you are" variety.

Even "Seventies Youth", one their more socially aware songs, is spoiled by a dirge-like tune and a delivery that has all the attack of a

KIF KIF (left) and KEITH face a new day and decide to go back to bed. Pic: GEORGE BODNAR.

damp squib in a barrel of blancmange. And why this emphasis on the instrumental anyway? Why their penchant for jamming? How does that kind of music fit in with their radical stance?

Keith Da Missile Base waxes lyrical: "Sometimes I feel that inside there's just a little bird that's singing — it's singing its heart out. I can't put *that* in words, no way, but sometimes when I'm really lucky, I can get that onto my bass.

"And there's a power in music, an energy moving through the crowd. Whoever's there will feel it, will feel stronger and more capable of handling the problems they're faced with in normal life. That's what music's for, what culture is all about.

"And pure music, as it comes from the heart, is the best way of expressing that power. I believe that, I truly do."

Well, maybe. But I don't hear that in Here And Now's music. Which doesn't invalidate their free gig policy — obviously — but it does present a problem. Because, if Here And Now fail in their bid to alter the structure of the Music Biz, it won't be through any lack of determination, but because — to my mind — their music lacks the passion and perception to make enough people *care* about them.

But — free gigs! Briefly, this is how it all began. Here And Now (a different line-up) used to play *cheap* gigs. Their equipment regularly fell apart, they had to hire a PA and transport, which is why they needed the money. One day Daevid Allen heard of them, found them, worked with them — as Planet Gong they sold an album to Charly Records for a straight cash payment and a guarantee that the record would be sold cheaply. They were able to buy equipment and a PA. When Daevid Allen pulled out, his prestige had rubbed off on the band. They sold another album to Charly ("Give And Take" — retail price £2.25), bought more equipment, the bus, a truck. And so — free tours.

TABLE at a table. Pic: TAYLOR.

"Free gigs are a good idea. But we could get a good deal and become real bastards . . ."
Russell Young, Table

This free tour was their fourth within 12 months; their most extensive to date, covering most areas of England plus dates in Scotland and Wales, each gig featuring local bands, and frequent guest bands — in Liverpool, The Table; in Bolton, The Fall.

Day to day expenses are met by a collection taken at each gig. The average take is about £27—£30. In Wales, the band reckoned themselves lucky to get £15 per gig, which meant they went hungry. At Manchester and Liverpool, they took about £70 each night. The money is spent on food, diesel for the bus and equipment truck, and on emergencies — like the bus breaking down. At gigs, the band also sell their albums (but the money goes to Charly) and give away copies of their own magazine.

About the relationship to Charly, Keith says: "They're really quite good to us. They have to be. We're their big white hope for the future. It's a con job, like everything else. They think they've got another Pink Floyd or whatever." Uproarious laughter resounds around the bus. "We know what we are, but we allow them to get what they need out of us, which is a good deal less than they get out of other bands 'cos we insist they sell the albums cheap.

"We do free tours, right, and one of the ways we finance this is by selling albums. But you don't have to sell them at £4.50 to get your money. We're proving that. You can sell them at half price and still make it a viable concern — make it possible to have this bus and the equipment truck and the PA and most of the other things."

But free gigs are an athema to those who live within the shadow of their wallets. Not only the establishment promoters, but 'alternative' promoters.

Kif Kif: "The guy at the Roundhouse called it misplaced idealism. He just freaked out and lost his temper and screamed down the phone at us for about ten minutes, saying it was a big fucking throwback to '67, it would never work, it was all a load of rubbish, and he *had* to make lots of money blah blah blah blah."

And those college promoters who think free gigs are just a Mickey Mouse enterprise shove the band into a tiny room built to hold 150 people, and then find themselves with a potential riot on their hands when 600 turn up . . .

"That's negative opposition — lethargy, apathy, a lack of belief in what we're doing." Keith shrugs. "But it's changing. We're gradually building up a network of people and venues all over the country who're into putting on free gigs."

Despite the hassles, Here And Now have already proved that free tours are feasible.

"If we can do it for free," says Kif Kif, "maybe other people will see it's not impossible, and start doing it as well."

"So music and big business won't go hand in hand any longer," adds Steffy darkly.

■ We Wanna Bite The Hand That Feeds Us (But Not Unitl After We've Been Fed)

THERE ARE contradictions. Of course. One irony is that Here And Now's commitment to free gigs is not always shared by their guest bands. Both The Table and The Fall say they can't afford to do many free gigs.

Russell Young of The Table: "Are free gigs a good idea? Oh obviously. But what could happen is that we'll get a big deal, turn into real bastards, and say, 'Fuck off free gig people'.

"I mean, you can't really say. I like the idea. It's a good way to get across to people, but you have to live. Our aim is to equip ourselves first, then maybe we would think about free gigs."

The Table are keen to secure a deal with a major company, despite unhappy experiences with Virgin Records and Chiswick. The group terminated their contract with Virgin after a period of discontent climaxed, they say, with the company refusing to provide financial support for the support slot The Table had been offered on a major tour. Then a one-off deal with Chiswick failed to work out, the band again feeling that promotion had been inadequate. More folls

Tony Barnes: "There were 3,000 advance orders for 'Sex Cells', while singles by Johnny Moped and Radio Stars had far fewer, but Chiswick went with them because they had long-term deals. They were protecting their investment."

So The Table are hoping to sign with a company who have the financial clout for a lavish promotional campaign. All for the sake of their art.

Russell again: "We're looking for a good deal cos we've got good material and we're not gonna waste it in the kind of situation that's happened before — where it's put out and gets no promotion, no nothing, and nobody gets to hear it. We've wasted songs really, with the record companies we've been with."

Mark Smith of The Fall has less sympathy with free gigs, though the band supported Here And Now at Bolton, and on their Scottish dates. Why are they doing free gigs with Here And Now?

"Well, we wanted to play Bolton with them, cos they're mates, like. And we wanted to get up to Scotland cos there's a lot of interest up in Scotland for us, and we couldn't get up there on our own, cos we don't use agents."

You arrange all your own gigs?

"Yeah. We're OK for England, but not Scotland."

Are you keen on doing free gigs?

"Not really. I mean, it's economically impossible for us. We're working lads."

Here And Now do it.

"I know that."

If it works for them, why can't it work for you?

"How can it work for anybody? How can you work for nothing? Do *you* work for nothing? I mean, I don't. Our fucking band's been on the dole for two years, we're just starting to make a living.

"I think people should pay for what they fucking get, anyway. We do this cos we like Here And Now, that's all.

"I dunno. I just wanna make a living out of the band, you know. I want independence, which we've got. We fight for it. (Pause) Is the bar open?"

■ After The Standing Still?

ANOTHER IRONY is that Here And Now's policy of playing with new wave bands — designed to break down the barriers between 'punk' and 'hippy' — sometimes has the reverse effect. Like The Fall's set at Bolton.

I'm so befuddled by the flu I can't tell if The Fall are good, bad or playing the National Anthem. But the punks at the front pogo exuberantly, spilling onto the stage and repeatedly stopping the set, despite Mark Smith's plea to "use yer fucking heads"; while the hippies gather at the back, jeering and chanting "off off off."

Then it becomes easy to laugh at Here And Now's naivety, to shrug your shoulders and ask, "What does it matter anyway? It's just another game, isn't it, this wonderful world of rock 'n' roll? Another stupid, squalid game." And so we hide our compromises, our own lack of vision, behind a cynical sneer. Well, I do.

But Here And Now aren't cynical, and they don't play that rock'n'roll game. Whatever you think of their music, the implications of their stance are fascinating. Free gigs? Cheap albums? Hardly Utopia, but at least a tiny step in the right direction.

Strangely, the music press have largely ignored Here And Now and their ideas.

"It could be they feel the whole thing is so trivial and unimportant and small and ridiculous, it's hardly worth bothering about," sighs Keith.

But the band suspect there could be other reasons.

"The music press is controlled by industry and big business, the same as most other things," says Kif Kif, "and what we're doing is creating an alternative to that. And some people are gonna hang on to that old thing, right, they ain't gonna let go of it, and they're gonna die with it."

Brave words. But the outlook is not entirely hopeless. The Pistols proved it was possible to get up and play whatever you liked — and people did. The Desperate Bicycles proved it was possible to make and sell your own records — and people did. Here And Now have proved it's possible to play free tours and cut album prices by 50% — and people could.

And for the future? Here And Now suggest an alternative free gig circuit, an equipment pool, co-operatively-owned printing and pressing plants. And there's also a need for a distribution organisation to work with the independent labels, perhaps in the same way that the Publications Distribution Cooperative works with independent magazines in the publishing field.

Pipe dreams? Maybe. But at least people are trying. The ideals of '67 and '77 are still burning strong in '79.

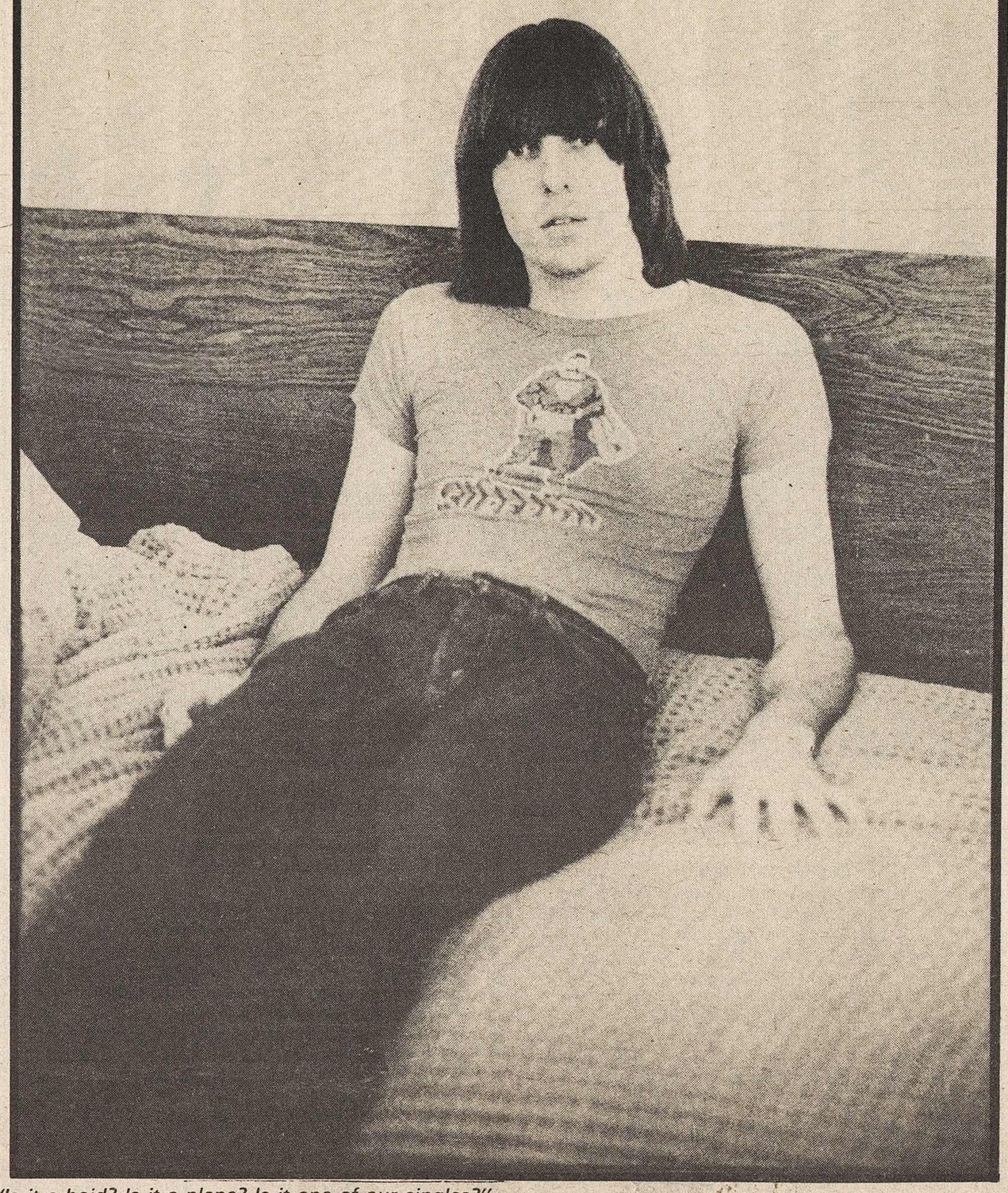
Keith: "That fucker in the middle. He milks the bands and he milks the people. He's the one. We're cutting him out."

Kif Kif: "In '67 it was like a dream. People said, 'Oh yeah, let's play free music'. They dropped lots of acid, went out and borrowed lots of money, and ended up in a big fucking mess.

"The difference now is that people are making it work in the real world. In a real way."

HERE AND NOW there and then (L-R): Keith, Suze, Annie, Steffy.

SINGLES



Pic: PENNIE SMITH

"Is it a boid? Is it a plane? Is it one of our singles?"

Anudder Ramone Anudder Planet

● SINGLE OF THE WEEK (to the manor born)

RAMONES: She's The One (Sire). I am the Watcher. In a universe but a breath from your own, the roulette wheel of probability has lodged in a different hole, the winds of chance have blown strange ships to familiar ports and the minicab of fate has delivered parcels to destinations you just wouldn't *believe,* Honeychile. In other words, it is a foreign country, they do things differently there and I'm getting dangerously out of character here.

In this universe (a virtual mirror-image of your own), all else is equal, the world is almost as you know it and only one factor distinguishes one from t'other, as follows: IN THIS UNIVERSE THE RAMONES GET HIT RECORDS. By my reckoning, therefore, "She's The One" is The Ramones' tenth hit single (don't doublecheck, left the pocket calculator in another continuum). Surf chords (doowop without the backing vocals), wall-of-sound with memoranda pinned upon it, the kind of teenage treat undeserved outside a perfect world . . . and in your dumbo universe, O pitiful ones, it will get nowhere. It will bomb. It will flop. It will be outsold by people who have neighbour wit, imagination, power nor ripped jeans and cretinous expressions.

This is why you're in a temporal/spatial cultural ghetto, you mindless clowns! I am the Watcher and I'm bored shitless with just sitting around and eavesdropping. Improve your universe or you won't have the Watcher to kick around any more (spacewarp out stage left, mumbling heartfelt cliches, etc).

● MARKETING PLOY OF THE WEEK (one plays, the other doesn't).

DR. FEELGOOD: Milk And Alcohol (United Artists). This single comes in two editions, each with its own variation - on - basic - design pic sleeve. One is pressed in hideous dyspeptic turd-hued vinyl (just a notion: could this be significant?) and the other in pristine white (aha: Sussed! Brown for alcohol and white for milk! What clever chaps these record companies employ nowadays).

Perhaps as a subtle piece of propaganda for sobriety — which is, after all, what one expects from the Feelgoods — the brown edition has been pressed to sound like forty skeletons copulating in a dustbin, or at the very least like a record covered in ethnic scratches direct from the '60s, while the white one sounds more or less like the Feelgoods. Read, learn, memorise and inwardly digest: don't buy the brown one unless you happen to be partial to the sound of forty skeletons doing what I said they were doing before. Buy the white one (or an ordinary black one if United Artists have bothered to manufacture such a thing) and hear a John Mayo shuffle with lyrics scribbled by Nick Lowe on a fag packet and delivered by Lee Brilleaux in his grizzliest growl.

JOEY TRAVOLTA: I'd Rather Leave While I'm In Love (RCA). Just goes to show that anyone can get to make a record if they know someone who knows Robert Stigwood. The British public appears to be programmed to lap up a certain amount of syrupy dishwater in ballad form each year, and this is basic Formula One Soft Soap. Heading your way in '79. One gets to dance with OBE's the other doesn't.

FINGERPRINTZ: Dancing By Myself (Virgin). What's big and green and warped? The new Fingerprintz 12-inch single on Virgin Records, that's what! Had to look away while it was playing in case it made me seasick, but it sounded fairly reasonable — some obscure point about the narcissism inherent in the disco phenomenon (which I read about in the papers recently and it all sounds perfectly dreadful) done in a wistful sort of pop manner. Pause only to wonder if the Jimmie O'Neill who plays guitar and wrote the songs is any relation to a gent named Jimmie Shelter who used to be on Oval many moons ago. Vaguely modern in an old fashioned kind of way.

BOB DYLAN: Changing Of The Guards (CBS). Vaguely old-fashioned in an old-fashioned kind of way. One of the less impressive tracks from one of Dylan's less impressive albums. He's done better in the last six-teeeen yeahhs (six-teen yeahs) ohhh six-teen . . . stop it!!!

LEIF GARRETT: I Was Made For Dancing' (Scotti Brothers). Ah, Leif. I wish you hadn't been made at all.

CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY leaves the review room and pleads insanity

THE THREE DEGREES: Woman In Love (Ariola). What's small and blue and vaguely boring in an exquisitely tasteful sort of way? The new Three Degrees single (bet you guessed). Hits beget hits beget hits, and this tiny agony will do better as a follow-up to the fairly boisterous (loved the gowns, girls) "Givin' Up Givin' In" than it would have done had it escaped on its own. Which well-known pub is occasionally referred to as the Housewive's Delight? Why? What has this to do with Olivia Newton-Squirrel's OBE? What is the capital of North Dakota? Who has the largest personal account at the New York branch of the First National Bank and what does he spend it on?

DAN KELLAHER: I Couldn't Help But Cry (Chiswick). Sounds more like a Beatles record than anything else this week, though Mr Kellaher's chucked in a few too many descending major/minor modulations for absolute safety. Could sell well in the States if the import record shops aren't snowed in.

MARTIN O'CUTHBERT: Serene Machines (Esoteric). A panel of cloth-eared cynics have decided that this will sell less than any other single released this week (writes A Doctor). A Bowiesque instrumental which meanders where it should menace, this sounds as if Martin's overdubs are slipping. Vaguely profound in a sort of pointless way.

WIRE: This record is white and shows the dirt. Its surface is injured but rarely hurt. Guitars twang, keyboards ching, a voice intones. It is 3.55: your reviewer groans. It sounds soft and squishy, I can't hear the words. Time passes: how absurd. This group are overrated your correspondent demurs . . . sod it, I'm bored. Onwards (nice cover, tho').

HEAVY COCHRAN: I've Got Big Balls (Psycho). Heavens to Betsy. I didn't realise that this original pressing of Heavy's ditty is already a collectors item. Can't think why. Dub-influenced production, heavy reliance on cheap fuzz-box, lotta reverb and the B-side's called "Well, Fairly Big". The punch-line, by the way, is "I've got big balls of resentment." An epochal release, and the best-designed label of the week (watch it go round and improvise your very own mantra. Hi, Richard!)

TENNIS SHOES: (Do The) Medium Wave (Bonaparte). The Art School dance goes on for ever, and oh, how I wish it would stop. There are NINE of these buggers. It's on black vinyl, but in its defence it must be stated that purchasers receive a free zoetrope with each copy. copy.

THE DOLL: Desire Me (Beggars Banquet). Before I read the handout that came with this DOUBLE SINGLE IN A FOLDOUT PIC SLEEVE, I thought it was just sub-Blondie tantalopap by a group fronted by a tall girl with too much make-up and a fetish for imitation leopard-skin. After I read the handout I realised that it was the work of Marion Valentino, a wizardess, a true star and a tall girl with a fetish for imitation leopard-skin. Now I'm confused. And when Hulk get confused Hulk gets mad. When Hulk gets mad, Hulk turns back to page 12 and basks in the glory of seeing Hulk's picture in paper (boy, am I gonna regret this when Marion Valentino is a big star and in a position to start taking revenge on everybody who sneered at this record).

STEPPIN' OUT: Who's To Know? (Charly). What's big and blue and contains the worst white reggae that I've ever heard in my life? Awwwww . . . someone must've told you.

GREGG DIAMOND BIONIC BOOGIE: Cream Always Rises To The Top (Polydor). And shit still floats. What else is new?

THE USERS: Kicks In Style (Warped). Nostalgia is one thing, but making records that sound like The Damned on a bad night is definitely taking the piss.

DAVE WARNER'S FROM THE SUBURBS: Suburban Boy (Festival). A hot Australian import, this record renders necessary the invention of a new Spurious Category: will you please meet and greet Tongue-In-Cheek Australian Power-Pop? "The Ozzie accent gives it great ethnic charm," opined Paul Rambali and who am I to quarrel with an Italian?

BOSTON: A Man I'll Never Be (Epic). And a wimp you already are. So what else is new?

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: Theme From Superman (Warner Brothers). Fine movie. Pity about the music.

EDDIE RABBITT: Every Which Way But Loose (Elektra). The title song of a movie in which Clint Eastwood breaks all precedent and makes movie history by walking into the sunset with an orangutang. Mr Rabbitt announces at the beginning of the song that he's not the kind of man who believes in strings. Naturally, they show up approximately thirty-two bars later. I'm not the kind of man who believes in strings either, especially when they're this glutinously arranged. A bit of a Malpaso there, Eddie.

THE CANNIBALS: Nadine (Hit). Ballsy but indistinct thrash thru Uncle Chuck's urban chase sequence, with ex-Bishop, and expatriate Mike Spenser yowling away like he was born with shades on but had to have the leather jacket grafted on by a plastic surgeon a little later in life. Enthusiastic guitar, to say

Marion Valentino of The Doll exhibits her fetish for imitation leopardskin on the sleeve of her new single. But is it fair to imitation leopards?

the least. The acceptable face of the London R&B boom turned to the wall.

DEAD END KIDS: Heart Get Ready For Love (CBS). I am the Watcher. Relax, I've calmed down since I last saw you and I just wanted to tell you that in a continuum a heartbeat away from your own, the scooter messenger of chance has . . . oh, you remember that bit. Sorry. Anyway, in the universe of which I weave my song, Dr Feelgood are the biggest group in the entire history of human endeavour and even teenybop bands try to capture a little basic R&B in what they do. So you get records which sound like an unlikely mating of the Feelgoods and Child — i.e. a horrid little weenypop song performed over a guitar chug/drum shuffle with utterly rancid mouth harp (still, we can't all be Skid Marx). Hmmm. Interesting. The missing link between Slim Harpo and Kenny.

Woman (Black Bear). Glad I'm not one of The Stops. Heavy handed social satire. The kind of thing that gives protest singers a bad name. Women buying this will be declared "funny" by a panel of experts.

CARL GREENE AND THE SCENE: Click Clack Camera EP (Sirius). Best mock-'60s packaging of the week. The way the group stand around the car on the cover, the clothes and haircuts, the design, the dreadful back sleeve layout . . . it's truly authentic. The record's nice, but not in the same league.

GINA 'N' THE ROCKIN' REBELS: Rockin' On Down The Line (Alligator). Best rockabilly performance by a female singer since Wanda Jackson got religion in the late '50s. She keens, she snarls, she stays in tune, she has a sense of humour and — if asked nicely by someone she respects — she may even crawl on her belly like a rep-tahhhhl. Gina, I applaud. Humbly.

The singles page joins the front and rear of the new 'Goods sleeve.

DANNY WILD AND THE WILDCATS: Old Bill Boogie (Raw). Magnificently wonderful: the most authentic ersatz rockabilly sound imaginable (eat your heart out, Edmunds) put to a song about Her Majesty's Police Force. Ecstatometer busts: recommendation to actually go out and pay money for a copy of record issued, gunboats sent to Baltic, etc.

HOT WATER: Different Morning (Duff). Beatley descending chords, heavy phasing, enter bird singing like Grace Slick on a warm afternoon. The total effect is highly compelling, though the watery saxophone solo dissipates much of the tension. This record is not Duff, The Users' record is not warped, Heavy Cochran isn't psycho but Martin O'Cuthbertson is definitely esoteric. A variety of small curses rained down upon these misbegotten progenitors of silly names for record companies.

OLYMPIC RUNNERS: Sir Dancalot (Polydor). A drastic reinterpretation of crucial sections of the Arthurian fables: the mutant off-spring of James Brown and Sir Thomas Malory with a silver label. File under "This is what happens to white bluesmen in the post-boom era" and watch for it on *Top Of The Pops.*

THE DEFENDANTS: Headmaster (Edible). These guys used to be called School Meals until another band called School Meals zapped them with a passing-off action, so they've withdrawn their single and reissued it under their new name. I sympathise, boys, believe me, I sympathise. "Headmster" is a witty, intelligent record that doesn't come on complacent about its own wit and intelligence, plus it's fun. Is that good value for money or what?

I JOG AND THE TRACKSUITS: Red Box (Tyger). Sprightly little number in the Urban Ingenue mode about being in the proverbial ongoing waiting-for-a-bus situation, equipped with the kind of production that is either thrillingly modern or the result of a totally inadequate studio (ambiguity is the spice of life). No relation to the Tiger Records who put out the Vice Creems' single (reviewed last week), by the way.

DON LETTS/ STRATETIME KEITH/ STEEL LEG/ JAH WOBBLE: Steel Leg Vs The Electric Dread EP (Virgin). Wrong string but the right yoyo. The "Steel Leg" side features some member of the wide and growing PiL family ranting over a backdrop rendered interesting by the utterly unmistakable aluminium guitar of Keith Levine; followed by a dub rendered interesting by nothing at all, which is most of what happens during the piece. Don Letts' "Haile Unlikely" on the second side is, however, an achievement of almost gemlike proportions, *"Don' wanna go to Africa/don' wanna go to Zion/wanna stay inna Inglas' . . . right on, Brixton!/Right on Chelsea!/Right on, Islington . . . haile unlikely!"*

RUBY: Save Our Souls (Atlantic). The definitive horrible disco record. A hit!

PRISM

SEE FOREVER EYES

NOT ALL ALBUMS ARE CREATED EQUAL ...

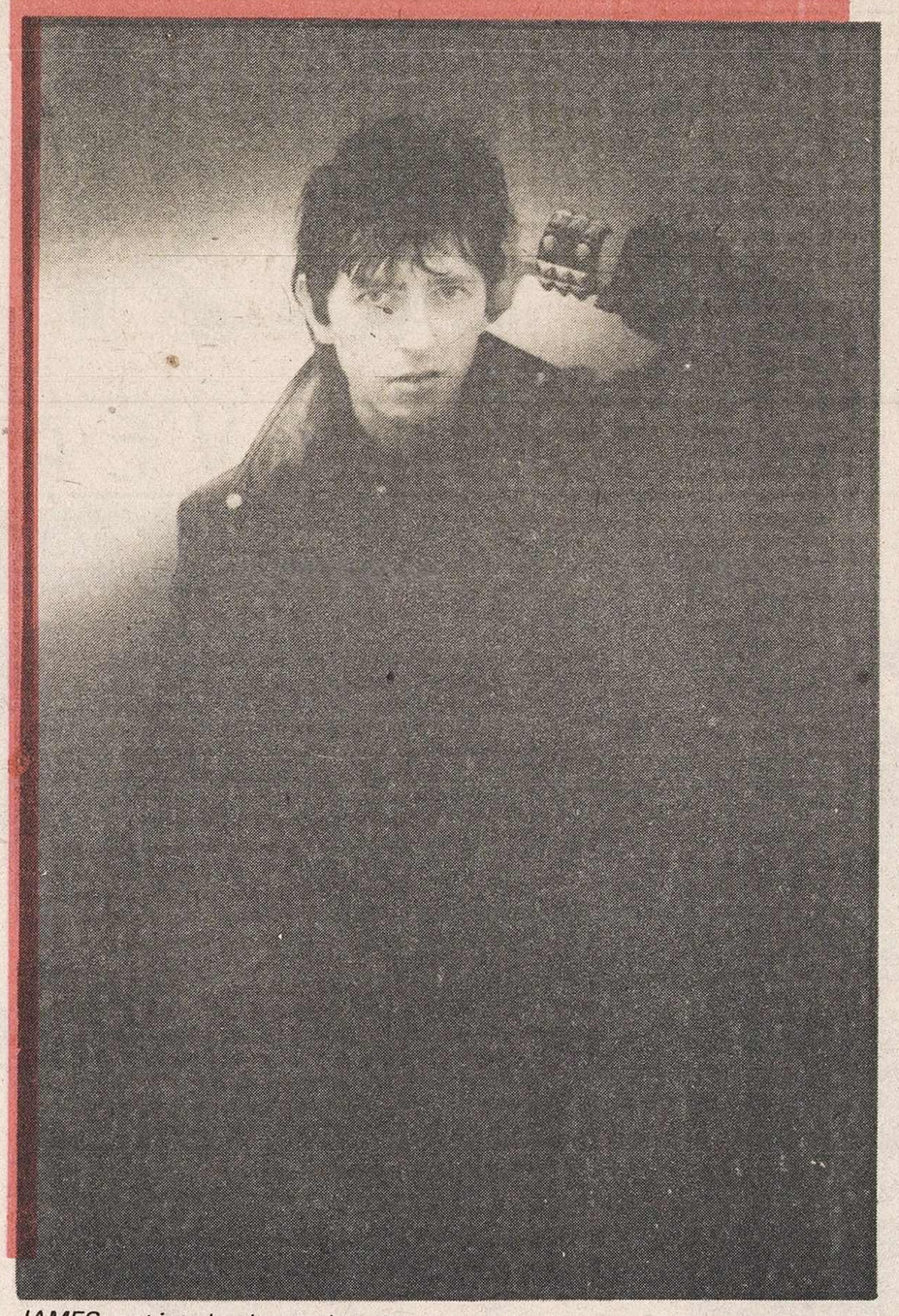
. . . neither are rock bands. "See Forever Eyes" is the second album by Canadian rock band Prism, a bitter-sweet blend of harmonies and hard-driving rock.
Ten songs which all qualify for the much abused description 'masterpiece.'
Ten good reasons to stop, look and listen to "See Forever Eyes".

PRISM

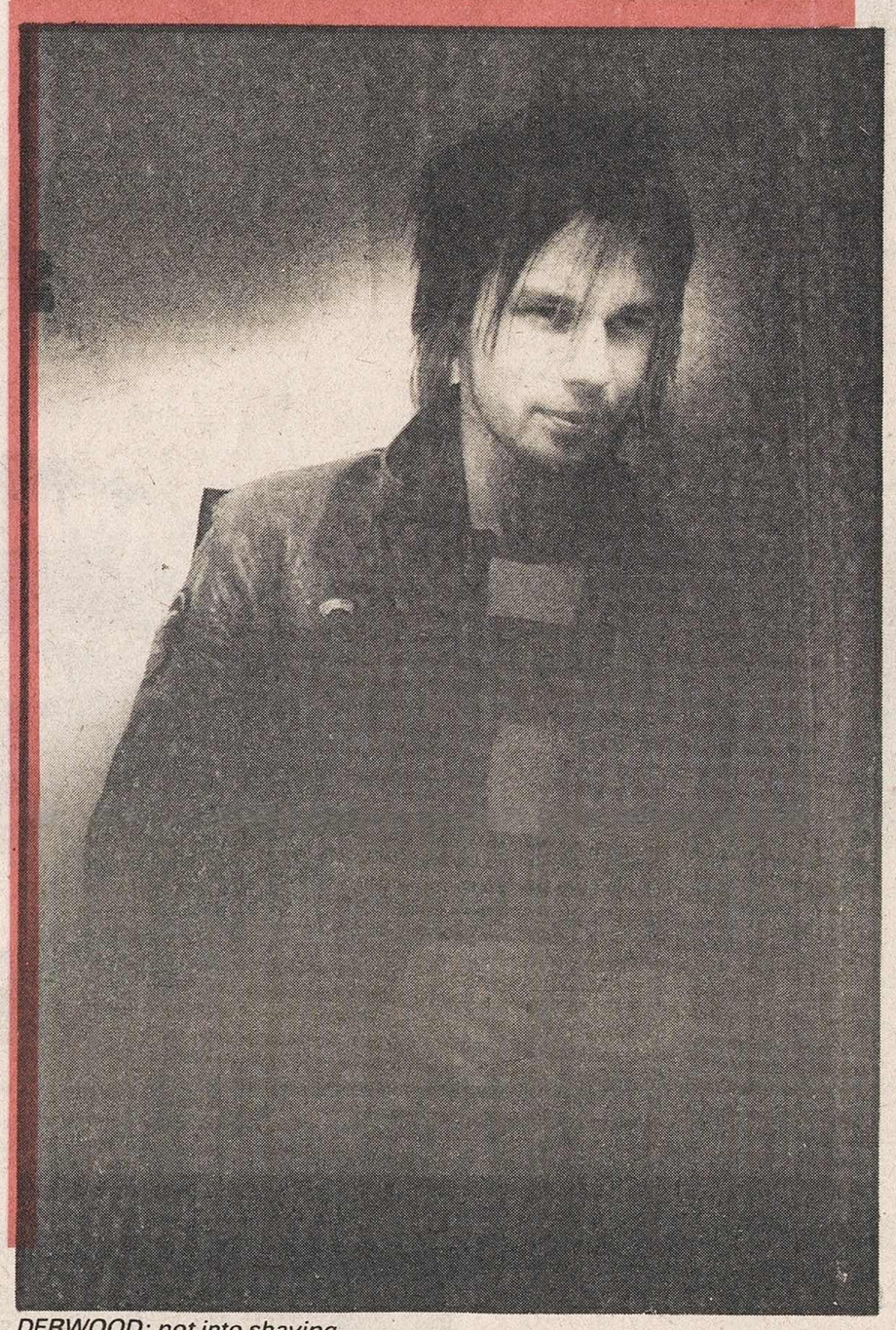
ARL 5014
ariola RECORDS & TAPES

ALL THE YOUNG DUDES?

Is the world still not ready for the Glamrock Revival?



JAMES: not into leather and studs



DERWOOD: not into shaving

GLEAN WHAT you will from the shapes of things that came to pass during 1978, but one commodity that was rejected with an almighty vengeance was 'prettiness'.

Pretty sounds, pretty colours, pretty girls and, most of all, pretty boys; they all found themselves out of favour, and nowhere more so than in the medium of rock music, that former bastion of acceptability for all the anaemic-looking blokes with their pronounced cheekbones and will o' the wisp hair-styles.

In their place marched the acceptable face of machismo as paraded by the likes of John Travolta, paint pot in hand and a worldly swagger to boot, and the perenially unshaven Bruce Springsteen, biceps continually on show —only the tattoo was missing, like a rock'n'roll approximation of Sylvester Stallone's ape-necked Sweeney archetype. It went all the way down the line to the likes of rough-hewn bog-Irish Bob Geldof's Jagger-minus-the-limp-wristing, and even dear old Jimmy Pursey, eyebrows like overgrown privet hedges and style gratis Andy Capp, Joe Brown and yer archetypal East End whippet trainer all rolled into one bounding bark.

Nothing remotely feminine about these chaps — heteros every last one of 'em, more the yob than the aesthete, with demonstrative deep voices and hearts of oak.

Indeed, to fully appreciate their stylistic pre-eminence over the past year you only need to check with the opposition, where Rod Stewart & Mick Jagger (not to mention Freddie Mercury — which we won't) became more desperately camp than ever, with their coy attitude dancing under the spotlight's all-too-penetrating glare. Bowie — a central influence in this particular cavalcade — chose to appear as nondescript image-wise as possible, which left only a handful of new-comers to carry the tradition.

Quickly dispensing with the likes of Japan plus the inevitable bunch of photogenic sissies who lucked out briefly on *TOTP,* precious few young bands seemed prepared to suggest any hint of the old pretty-boy veneer. Those that did were dicing with death.

Glen Matlock's Rich Kids trumpeted their soft boy stance, for example, backing it up with a modicum of traditional glam flash, but all to surprisingly little avail.

Yet their lack of encouraging feedback was a minor case compared to the slings-and-arrows of opinion meted out during 1978 at Generation X.

TO SAY that it was not quite the choicest of years for Gen X is quite an understatement. Their recorded output — a single and that long-anticipated first album — were first of all either damned with faint praise or else lambasted with gleesome relish by their respective critics — to the point where the disappointing sales of the album seemed almost of secondary importance. Original supporters in the press suddenly all seemed dissillusioned, the hard-core punk fans rounded on the band for being too flakey, and the new music buffs chose them as the perfect easy mark for a string of condescending broadsides.

As if that wasn't enough, some of the band's musical peers got in on the act, the most vehement being Joe Strummer, who heaped disdain on Billy Idol & Co. as a gutless facsimile of punk.

Whatever one's feelings about his rantings, Strummer is undeniably successful at projecting his chosen pitch of arrogance and menace. Contrast that with Billy Idol, who is almost offensively pretty, who is obviously 'not tough'. It doesn't matter that Strummer (nee Mellor) was in reality once a public schoolboy with obvious middle-class roots, just as Idol (nee Broad) studied English at Sussex University. Ultimately, the pair's irreconcileability is simply down to a conflict in style — and style is the very essence of rock, make no mistake on that score.

In a nutshell, Joe Strummer has successfully shaped himself as a rock'n'roll star in the eyes of the media, and Billy Idol hasn't.

IN TRUTH, many of the criticisms levelled against Gen X last year were pretty much warranted. Their debut album was a patchy affair, with a stilted production which sucked virtually every performance on the record dry of any spontaneity, giving the band's repertoire an unsettling air of self-consciousness. It thus showcased the band's shortcomings: it all sounded so lifeless, rarely transcending the band's myriad influences, and worse still, they sounded downright tame — due mostly, again, to production deficiencies. Tameness was the very last thing they needed.

After this failure, Gen X seemed to become downright petulant. Rather than quickly making up their lost ground, nothing was issued during the rest of the year.

The only signs of life were transmitted through what seemed like a well-oiled P.R. machine, firing out silly photos of certain Gen X members with their model girlfriends at Heathrow Airport and the like, generally playing the whole jet-set rock star shtick to the hilt in garish fashion. Considering that the new wave movement in the first place had been a direct reaction against such empty displays, one could forgive many of those who chose to round on the group for not holding to their initial beliefs. For those who were always sceptical on the Gen X issue, it merely proved that they were right all along.

"I must say first of all that in the past we have made some incredibly dumb statements to the press." Tony James, the group's bassist, main lyricist and easily their most locquacious spokesman, is addressing the dilemma at hand. James it is, who has allowed himself to be snapped several times in the aforementioned compromising fashion.

His rationale is simple and to the point.

"I checked back in my old books and magazines and saw the Stones being photographed with their girlfriends and thought, yeah, that's for me," he laughs.

To James, the deal is all very straightforward. Rock'n'roll is anything but dead — "rock'n'roll is a religion for me, always has been" — and all those years paying homage are now to be harvested in living out all the fantasies, however gauche, he holds in such high regard. The Rolling Stones, Dylan, The Who — these are the gods from who he draws his inspiration, and now he and his band are on the threshold of the lifestyle they once could only dream of.

The adamancy with which Gen X, and James in particular, articulate this passion makes them strong contenders for being the new wave's most reactionary band. Their ambitions are all too trendily derided these days — and not without good reason, bearing in mind that the gratuitous worshipping of the old tried-and-trues caused the virtual shut-down of rock's essential creative spark back there in the mid-'70s.

Messrs Parsons & Burchill defined the ideological difference 'twixt old and new in their reappraisal of "Street-Legal" and "Some Girls" just last week, when they denoted the new wave's most important factor as being its call to do-it-yourself as opposed to the old way, which called you merely to be a passive consumer in the overrated trifles and bogus myths. The only problem — as is the case with all ideologies — is that somehow it never quite works out that way in practice. Already a new hierarchy has been formulated and those in that dubiously exalted position — whether they like to think it or not — are slowly but surely falling in with the old reactionary swing of things. All of which leaves a band of self-confessed young reactionaries like Gen X . . . where?

IN PRACTICAL terms, of course, it leaves them wide open to being ceaselessly pilloried. No stone is left unturned by detractors. To wit: Gen X are only a pallid reflection of influences, such as The Who, Bowie, Reed, and Springsteen; Gen X are the perfect example of a band who are together simply because they *look* good, the music being of strictly secondary import, ad infinitum.

Much of this resentment appears to emanate directly from those who instinctively dislike Billy Idol. Idol, through no particular fault of his own, simply looks too pretty for his own good. That might seem a little far-fetched, but it nonetheless holds a marked sway over most initial responses to the group. There's adefinite feeling that such facial features automatically belong only in groups aimed solely at the lowest common denominator pop dreck market.

That Idol and Gen X have in fact stuck so resolutely to mining the hard rock vein only seems to exacerbate people's resentment — even though, if anything, they deserve at least a modicum of respect when one considers the comparative ease with which they could sell out and clean up in the teenybop market, or what's left of it.

Unfortunately, Idol himself doesn't help matters by adopting a superficially 'tough' exterior in most media encounters.

When I interview him, he has already drained one sizeable bottle of cheap wine, and is eyeing a second identical purchase on the table. The dubious plonk has provided him with a degree of Dutch courage, and the subsequent dialogue sees him edging rather clumsily over a set of poses that frankly are ill-becoming to his basic nature.

No he says, the critical haranguing hasn't phased him at all. He waxes on at length about the basic "spontaneity" of Gen X, which he seems to consider their most precious characteristic. Playing gigs is what makes it all worthwhile, he maintains. Yes, the gig violence still prevails — in fact,

Fab Pix: PENNIE SMITH

he reckons it's on the increase. At their disastrous recent performance at the Great British Music Festival for example, there were three serious fights, resulting in one stabbing. The guy died. Yeah, of course, it's depressing.

Idol gets passionate about all the ugliness at the band's gigs. His theory, ringing with characteristic wide-eyed naivete, although not implausible, is that live rock provides a perfect release valve for frustrations, a constructive channelling out. The breakdown is always caused by "a few destructive arseholes" bent on causing strife.

As the wine starts to sink into the bloodstream more steadily, Idol becomes more expansive. A stray question concerning the lyrics to "Promises, Promises", a song from the first album which many interpreted as being somewhat hypocritical — it's a put-down of people who've sold out their new wave ideals — motivates Idol's verbiage to spring into the realms of blithe obnoxiousness.

"It's just saying," he asserts, "I'm a star, y'know . . . that I'm just part of the whole music-hall tradition."

I see. Idol then starts to make a clumsy attempt at equating this so-called "music.hall tradition" with rock, all to little avail. His reverence for the music is just as rabid as James', but without the clarity of the latter's viewpoint. Idol consistently over reaches himself and becomes almost embarrassing when, during the recounting of a recent incident between himself and an obstreperous Teddy boy, he launches into a rank approximation of Lou Reed's speed-freak rabbitting on the "Take No Prisoners" live set.

"Cos, see, I believe in the little people, right. Like, I'm little people and there's millions of us everywhere. We're not gonna change anything . . . rock'n'roll's not gonna change anything. Only organisations like the C.I.A. can do that.

"I remember when I was 15 and my old man said to me, 'You know, you're a failure'. I mean I couldn't believe it."

Eventually two of his colleagues arrive: drummer Mark Laff and guitarist Derwood. The latter says absolutely nothing throughout, his dour, pinched features resembling the dog-eared contours of a young Jeff Beck, while Laff is uncannily reminiscent of Keith Moon in his clipped, cocky retorts.

The encounter provides few intriguing snippets of dialogue, although seeing the three extremely diverse personalities together is noteworthy, if nothing else.

SO IT COMES down to Tony James to provide me with the Gen X gist. There is a very real ulterior motive, because the second Gen X album, long since completed, is now ready for release. Entitled "Valley Of The Dolls", it may well prove to be the vital sink-or-swim vehicle for the band's career, either enabling them to transcend their current dilemmas or else forcing them that much further into the mire.

On a distinctly positive note, the record does boast a firm and sympathetic production gratis one Ian Hunter. Gone is the tonal mediocrity that previously dogged their ventures into the studio. Also the songs now boast riffs, chord progressions and nagging hooklines. Although often all too derivative (the title track is pure "Diamond Dogs" Bowie, complete with the "Rebel Rebel" riff give or take a changed octave or so, while another song, "English Rose", features a domineering riff obviously based on the "Sweet Jane" motif) they have enough self-generated style to stand on their own merits.

Lyrics are still something of a sore point. Lines like "kicking coke cans down the street" scarcely make for perceptive read-outs on street life — although it should be stated that never do the band descend to the pitiful depths of out-amd-out pastiche that The Boomtown Rats scoured in their squeamish Springsteen bowdlerisation "Rat Trap".

The presence of Ian Hunter — ironically another figure who's suffered of late from the twin griefs of public neglect and critical crucifixion — has obviously proved inspirational to a band who owe a large compositional debt to the finest hours of Mott The Hoople.

"He was the only one who ever mentioned rockabilly in one of his songs," remarks Billy Idol when asked why Hunter was chosen for the job, "In 'Roll Away The Stone' he referred to it — took it right back to its roots,"

Tony James rates Mott as virtually on a par with the Stones and Who as primary influences — he and his flat mate, The Clash's Mick Jones, both used to be fanatical Mott followers — and many of the stylistic debts in Gen X lyrics attributed to too much exposure to Bruce Springsteen are much closer to Hunter's style. (What *did* Bob Dylan start all that time ago?)

James is equally candid about his colleagues. When I mention my discomfort at having to face Idol's various bouts of self-assertion during our interview, his observations finally make sense.

"Actually, I know exactly what you mean but you've got to understand that Billy's been forced into that role due to innumerable pressures. I mean, he gets hassled so much in the streets — everyone seems to recognise him and they really hate him: '"Ere, Billy Idol, you fuckin' poof'. That's bound to put anyone on their guard. He's actually a very sensitive guy and in certain interviews he's let that side of himself come through and he's often really been torn to pieces in print afterwards as a direct result."

ALL THINGS considered therefore one could hardly blame Gen X for viewing the British music press with a good quotient of the malice they themselves have faced. James however retains a less grudging perspective.

"Obviously I've been aware of all the digs and snides in the press, but whatever indignation I've suffered has usually vanished when I actually meet the guy who wrote the thing in the first place. Like, I've seen Ian Penman and Paul Morley and I've just felt sorry for them. I can't feel antagonistic towards them afterwards. It gets absolutely ridiculous when there's someone like Jon Savage *(Sounds/Melody Maker)* who's slagged us. . .like, he won't even talk to me now but a year ago he was designing our bloody posters!

"Actually, one positive side to being slagged is that it tends to make us a more unified whole. When you've got outsiders railing against you, you not only get a kind of immunity to it ultimately, but it strengthens you as a band."

In a prior article in these pages, when Chris Salewicz guided us through the labrynthine complexities of the London SS family tree, the Pole mentioned Tony James' attributes as a rock band conceptualist. James has very fixed ideas about how a band should look, the necessary attitude to be adhered to, and so on.

On these issues, he remains immovable. Fat men can never be real rock'n'roll stars, for example. Facial hair is a fatal curse, while baldness is an irreconcilable deficiency.

"Yeah, I've always had very stringent views on what makes for a good rock and roll musician (laughs). I could never imagine myself being in a group with some *fat* guy!" He spits the word out with venom. "I just couldn't bring myself to talk to him. To me, having a group is much the same as having a girlfriend."

But isn't James aware of the contention that the Gen X 'look' veers a little too much towards pretty-prettiness? Seemingly not — to a former ex-dyed-in-the-tinsel glam rocker, there is apparently no such term as, uh, "too pretty".

"As far as I'm concerned, The New York Dolls had the ultimate look of all time. I've never really been able to envisage rock musicians as anything but 'flash' dressers. It's always been an integral part of it all for me. Like I was watching the Stones on telly just before New Year's Eve and that was exactly what I saw as *the* rock'n'roll style.

"I never really liked the punk urban guerilla look, y'know. It was never a patch on the Dolls' style."

NEVERTHELESS, Gen X went along with each trend in turn when the punk floodgates opened, lodging in agreeable proximity to the movement's central forcefield via their patronage first by Kings Road haberdasher John Krivine and then by Roxy Club prime mover Andy Czezowski.

Tony James had a hand in setting up the Roxy, and, for his sins, he can even claim the dubious honour of having given Sham 69 their first break in London. After being hustled mercilessly by a desperately naive Jimmy Pursey, James let Sham play support to Gen X at the Roxy. From such humble beginnings. . .

Not unnaturally, James now has a keen insight into the breakdown of the original punk community into warring factions.

"Obviously it was depressing to observe, because for a time there was a genuine sense of comradeship, of everyone working together.

"In retrospect, I now believe it was principally the managers who sowed the seeds of dissent. Various managers would make a distinct point of going round to their group and feeding them with paranoid delusions. Like, 'You've got to watch out for them,' or, 'You should hear what they're saying about you behind your back'."

The age-old saga of money and corruption rending asunder the fabric of a community.

James refuses to get in on the act of lambasting Gen X's various peers. Instead, he prefers to point out what happened when he first brought Ian Hunter back to his flat, to find Glen Matlock, Tom Robinson and Mick Jones already there playing a white label copy of Robinson's "Power In The Darkness" album.

"Hunter was taken aback — basically because the groups of his generation never did anything like acutally sitting down together and talking about their music." James laughs. "He was very impressed by the occurrence."

Perhaps the most striking thing about talking to James is the complete absence of any fear that Gen X might have 'missed the boat' careerwise. Optimism undented, he sees no reason to doubt the band's life expectancy, either now or in the future. Indeed, he regards the band's recent critical maulings and general sense of uncertainty as the good life compared to the year when they were forced to subsist on ten quid a week while waiting for a record contract to materialise.

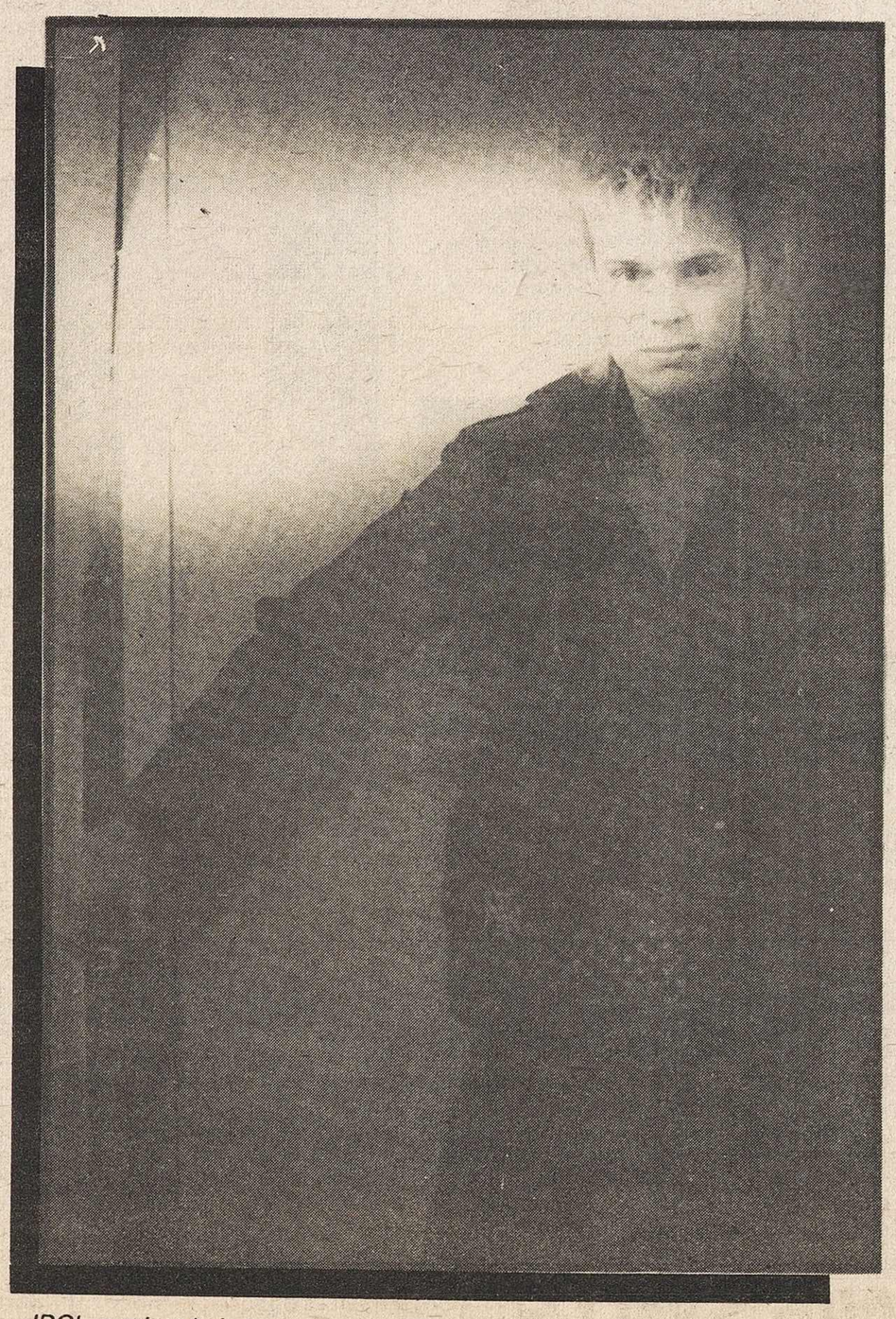
"Our main desire. . .what we all want to get out of this more than anything else, is to have the ultimate satisfaction of knowing we never really dropped our knickers in public, symbolically speaking.

"We've been through the first flush of naivete, we've been feted and slagged, and there's still nothing I'd fundamentally want to change.

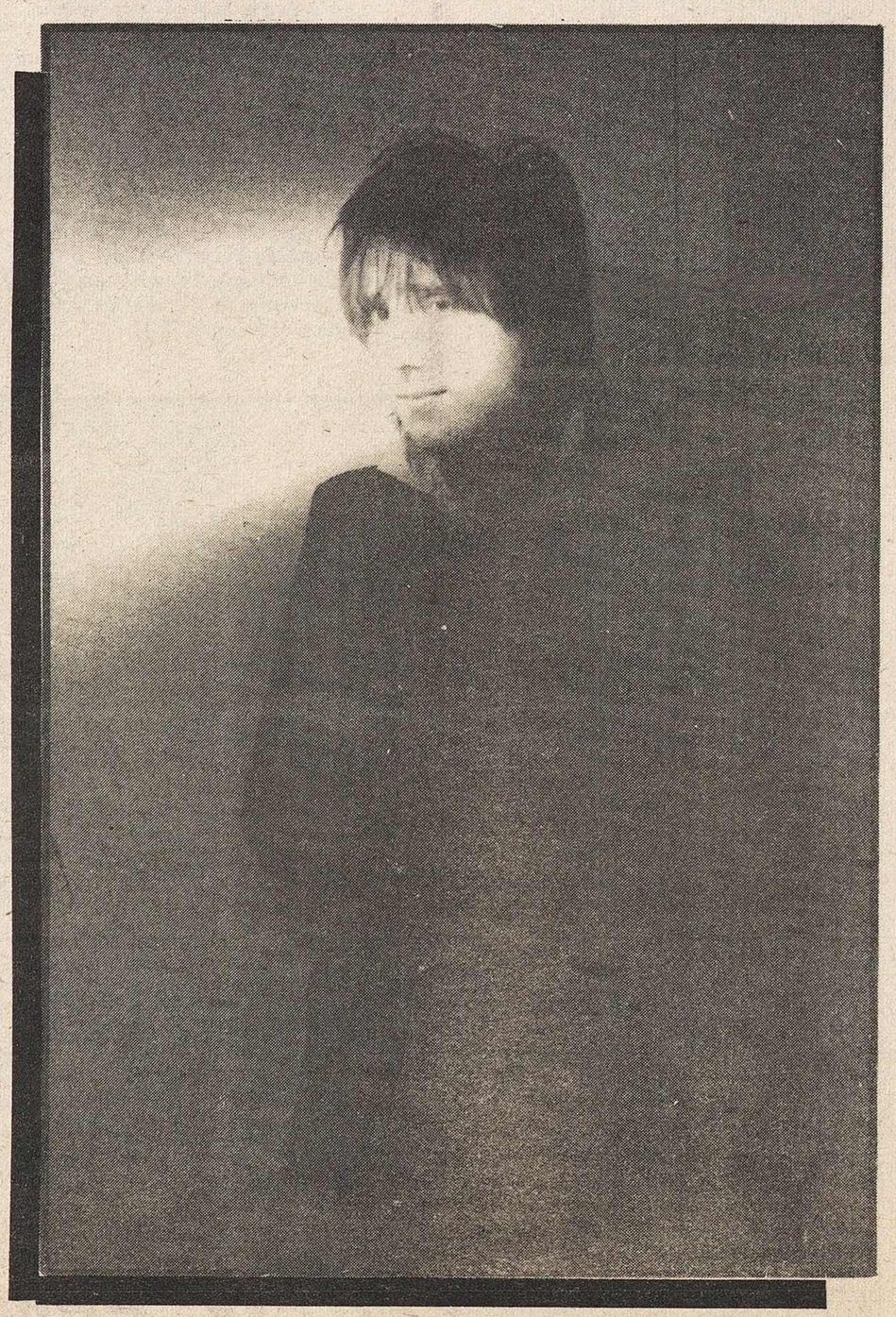
"The first album could've been better, although I still stand by the songs.

"I can't really ask for more than to be proud of what we put our name to."

NICK KENT swaps beauty hints with GENERATION X



IDOL: not into being pretty



LAFF: not into much

PRODUCT PACKAGING, AND REBEL MUSIC

BOB LAST, Fast Product kingpin and pioneer of gift-wrapped orange peel and secondhand cake-cups, discusses his concept of selling rock'n'roll (Mekons, Human League, Gang Of Four) in 1979. Words: IAN CRANNA. Pix: LAURIE EVANS.

"IT'S A PRODUCT world. The old ideas of product as impersonal 'stuff' tend to be illusions. I'm positively coming to grips with the *real* situation, as it actually is. You live in a world of product. I may not *like* the present situation but if you want to do anything positive, you've got to accept certain things about it and work on its terms. It's no good going off and giving it the personal touch in a garret somewhere."

Product — don'tcha just love it? No? Funny that. For all our brave new realism about the music industry, there's still one word we can't bring ourselves to use about rock'n'roll and that's 'product'. Somehow the word still seems offensive when coupled with what we fondly consider to be our 'rebel music'.

But aren't we kidding ourselves? Even the most independent of 45s, however obscure or politically committed, is the end product of a system, a cog — no matter how small — in the entertainment industry machine.

One person who certainly has no illusions, yet who bridges the gap between 'non-commercial' music and the commercial process better than most, is Bob Last, speaker of the opening quote.

Bob Last is to all intents and purposes the lynchpin of Fast Product who, in the brief space of their first four singles, have unearthed no fewer than three of this country's most radically promising outfits — The Mekons, The Human League and The Gang Of Four.

OUR BACKDROP for this investigation is a row of dilapidated tenements on a cobbled backstreet of Edinburgh. On the near skyline, Edinburgh Castle sits snugly atop its imposing crags, bathed in clean opal spotlights against the deepest of deep purple night skies.

Meanwhile, inside one of the grimy dwellings opposite, barricaded by large wooden shutters, life is stirring in a tiny, paraphernalia-cluttered room that serves as an office. We are chez Fast Product.

The official caucus of Fast Product is five people: Last's flatmate Hilary Morrison, The Rezillos' soundman Tim Pearce, Simon Guest from Leeds whose previous career includes an eccentric jazz/funk band called Best Friends, "a guy from Birmingham called Simon", and of course Bob Last himself.

Though he is keen to stress the contributions and technical expertise of the others, Fast Product was Last's brainchild and he is clearly central to the whole operation.

Or, as Last only half jokingly puts it, "Fast Product is essentially me sort of being parasitical on these other people, ripping them off and having them work for nothing!"

Last is a tall, athletic-looking 23-year-old with a penchant for eccentric (but useful) clothes such as bright orange or, as now, army lovat green overalls with battered tennis shoes.

Confident in his own abilities without being arrogant or obnoxious, he simultaneously combines a shrewd and businesslike grasp of realities with an amiable nature and a droll sense of humour. As an interviewee, he's intelligent, articulate and a stimulating exponent of his own ideas.

Last's own history — surrendered gracefully though he's clearly exasperated at clouding the issue with (to him) trifling and worthless detail ("We're not into personality cults") — is rich in variety.

Raised in schools as far apart as Sussex, New Zealand and Pennsylvania (his globetrotting father is a "mushroom expert"), he finally settled in Edinburgh to study architecture there for two years ("I think everyone should do two year's architecture actually"). His subsequent career included a spell as a technician with a travelling theatre and a year as a designer with The Traverse, Edinburgh s radical theatre club. After this period of flirtation with the theatre — which Last candidly calls "totally opportu nist" — he left to start Fast Product.

Travelling to York, Last then spent some time with the aforementioned Simon and Martin on various projects before lack of funds made it necessary to find gainful employment. Through knowing guitarist John Callis, he joined the roadcrew of the then emerging Rezillos and became successively their road manager and manager proper.

"I'd never seen myself as a performer," Last reflects, shifting piles of paperwork to find a seat, "but I've always been a consumer of rock music on a fairly big scale, more than any other medium. So the opportunity to actively earn some money and be involved seemed like a good one."

FAST PRODUCT has been termed "an operation" so far because it is central to understanding the idea of Fast Product to appreciate that it is not just — or even essentially — a record label.

"Fast Product was started as a company in March 1977," Last recalls. "We weren't necessarily going to be a record label or anything then. It was just me at that time, and I was just looking around for the right sort of package to communicate or use.

"I'd been tinkering with films a lot, but the trouble with films was if you were doing anything interesting then it was automatically labelled as being avant-garde and weird, you know? So I just waited for the right package to come along.

"It just so happened that with the new wave — or the new wave singles — suddenly there was the right package to put out. You could do something that was interesting without it being labelled as avant-gardist. So we became a record label.

"The aspect that I'm concerned with in Fast Product is the package, and the implications of package — how you're going to market it, how it's going to get to people."

Last's definition of a package, however, is a very wide one.

"I think of anything as a package. Like, a magazine is a package of a kind. Any way of organising your information is a package, in that sense."

The businesslike language Bob Last uses is not without significance, for behind Fast Product lies the basic premise that you simply can't drop out.

"I don't believe in dropping out or alternative cultures or any of this nonsense. You've got to get in there and struggle."

In the '60s, according to Last, everyone got into dropping out. "That was the idea — if you wanted to change things, drop out and have an alternative. And it was immediately re-incorporated. You now get the same ideals that everyone had in the '60s thrown back at you to sell completely the opposite in all sorts of ways. So the new wave rejection of all that '60s kind of thing — I think the new wave is not about dropping out, it's about dropping in, fighting your way in."

FAST PRODUCT, in fact, is quite an aggressive notion — the emphasis on product, the idea of speed. Its operators have no hesitation about using the system for their own ends, nor do they have any worries about purity of ideals. Bob Last even regards business as a creative activity.

"You can't go back in time. You've got this kind of packaging lying around, and this world of advertisements that we live in, so you've got to start being creative about it."

Certainly the Fast Product packages so far have been very dodgy commercial propositions in the accepted mainstream rockbiz sense. If packages they be, they certainly ain't cute little boxes in nice wrapping paper and pretty ribbon.

"I use that word (package) because I like some of the connotations," Last says almost casually, "but in fact I'm redefining it."

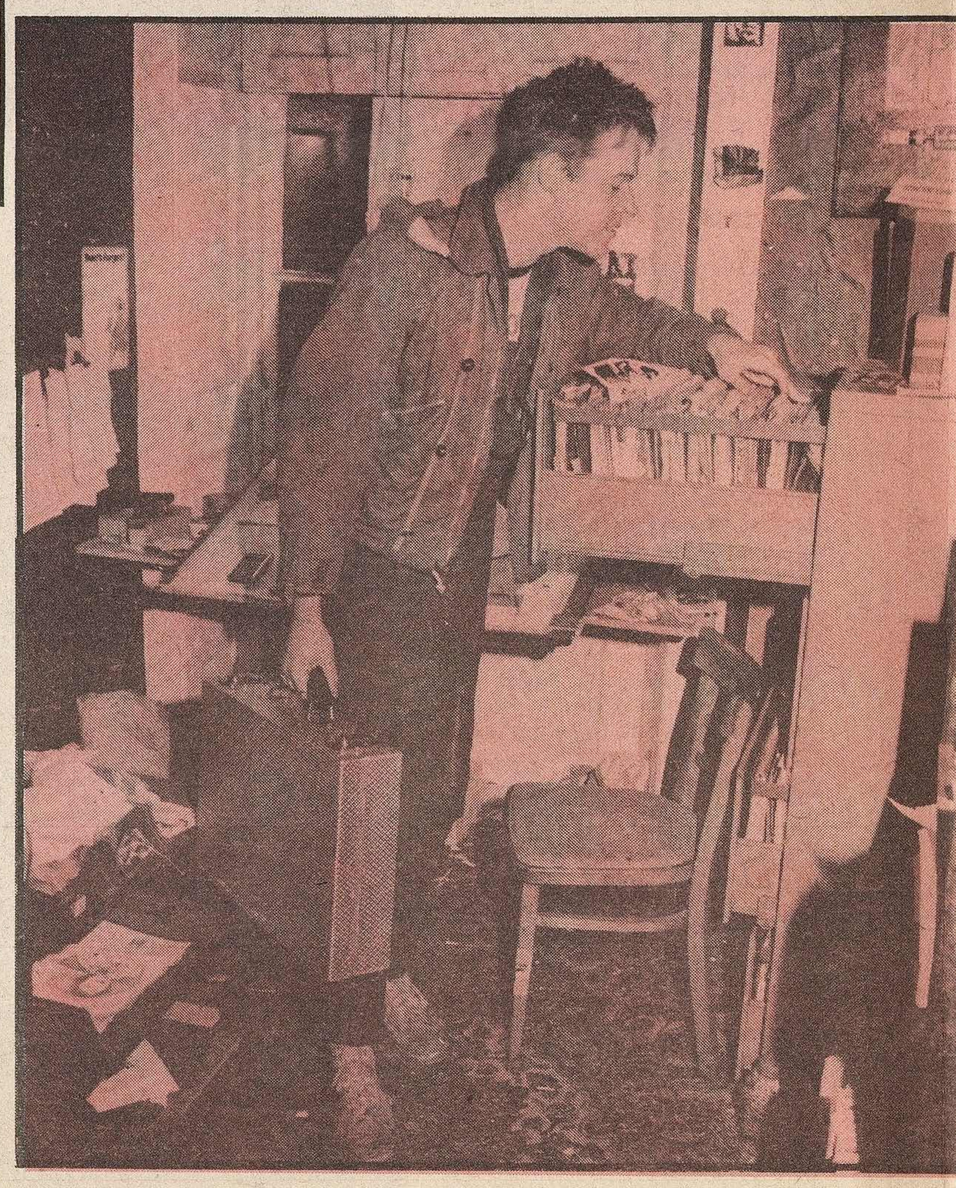
AS FAST Product have chosen to be a record label for the present, the bands involved obviously supply the creative content, but Last too has a vital role to play. Firstly he selects the bands to be put out, and secondly he supplies the creative presentation and marketing.

If you want an example of his creative thinking, then you couldn't wish for a better example than the first single from The Mekons, the first package from Fast Product to actually see the light of day (though there had been earlier projects, these being still in various stages of research).

The Mekons were discovered by Last on their very first gig, supporting The Rezillos in Yorkshire, at which point they'd been rehearsing for all of five days. Their instant appraoch appealed to his well developed sense of immediacy.

"It really gets up my nose," he fumes, "all these bands saying we've got to learn to play rock'n'roll properly before we can do a gig. It means that all they do is proper rock'n'roll and that nothing new ever happens. By the time people learn to play proper rock'n'roll, they've forgotten what their original ideas were."

Despite The Mekons' inevitable crudity, Last says he also enjoyed them on a straightforward level



SLOW QUICK FAST FAT

because "they were proof anyone *could* get up and do it. Because *they* enjoyed it, other people could enjoy it."

On a similar cerebral level, he liked them because their flexible personnel removed the importance of individual musicians and as an "event", a travelling garage to inspire others, they made musicianship irrelevant.

Thirdly, he liked them because of their combination of a free form experimental element with an ability to write short catchy songs.

And so, since Fast Product had finally acquired the necessary technical expertise and contracts to make records, Last decided that the approaches of The Mekons — and not some band playing proper rock'n'roll — were right for becoming Fast Product's first package. The Mekons were transferred to vinyl as they stood and "Never Been In A Riot" was created.

TO SAY that FAST I received a mixed reception would be putting it mildly. Acclaimed here at *NME* by Tony Parsons as single of the week, none of the independent distributors would touch it initially. Rough Trade said it was the worst record they'd ever heard.

Lightning also refused to stock it and only Virgin — who would take a few of anything without listening to it — would take it.

Even in Edinburgh — which is not lacking in creative or sympathetic people, boasting several small labels and magazines — the arrival of Fast Product's first offspring was something was something of a non-event, even an anti-event.

By any conventional standard, it was a terrible record.

But 'conventional' is definitely the operative word there. Crucially it was not terrible to Bob Last, and "Never Been In A Riot" was more than just a conventional terrible record thrown to the distributors to fend for itself. It was a Fast Product.

"I don't have any kind of ordinary idea of what's good and what's bad. Say, for example, I'm not interested in any ordinary idea of good musicianship.

"But I take into account a lot of other factors, like I look at *how* the actual record is going to be received and *where* it's going to go to. I would never think of a record as being a good record but not commercially viable and therefore put it out anyway because I thought it was good quality and ought to come out. I just don't think like that at all.

"By making a positive thing out of the idea of product, I can think about things like marketing in a positive way. So I don't find a conflict, for example, between the record I may have recorded which I enjoy — which is what it comes down to, I suppose — and how I would have to market it. It's very much thought of at one time."

Any training that Last may have had before was not as an artist but as a designer — a crucial difference. It allows him, he believes, to see things intuitively as product and "a whole relation of things". He gives as his example The Mekons again.

"Obviously they had to be recorded in a crude way," Last explains carefully, "because we wanted a fairly straightforward version of what they were doing live at that stage.

"But we didn't want to pretend we were making just a document of live performances. We wanted people to be aware that it was in fact a recording. Because it was on record, there were a whole load of other processes involved. Hence, for example, the microphone on the cover, on a very simple level.

"And again the decision to have an

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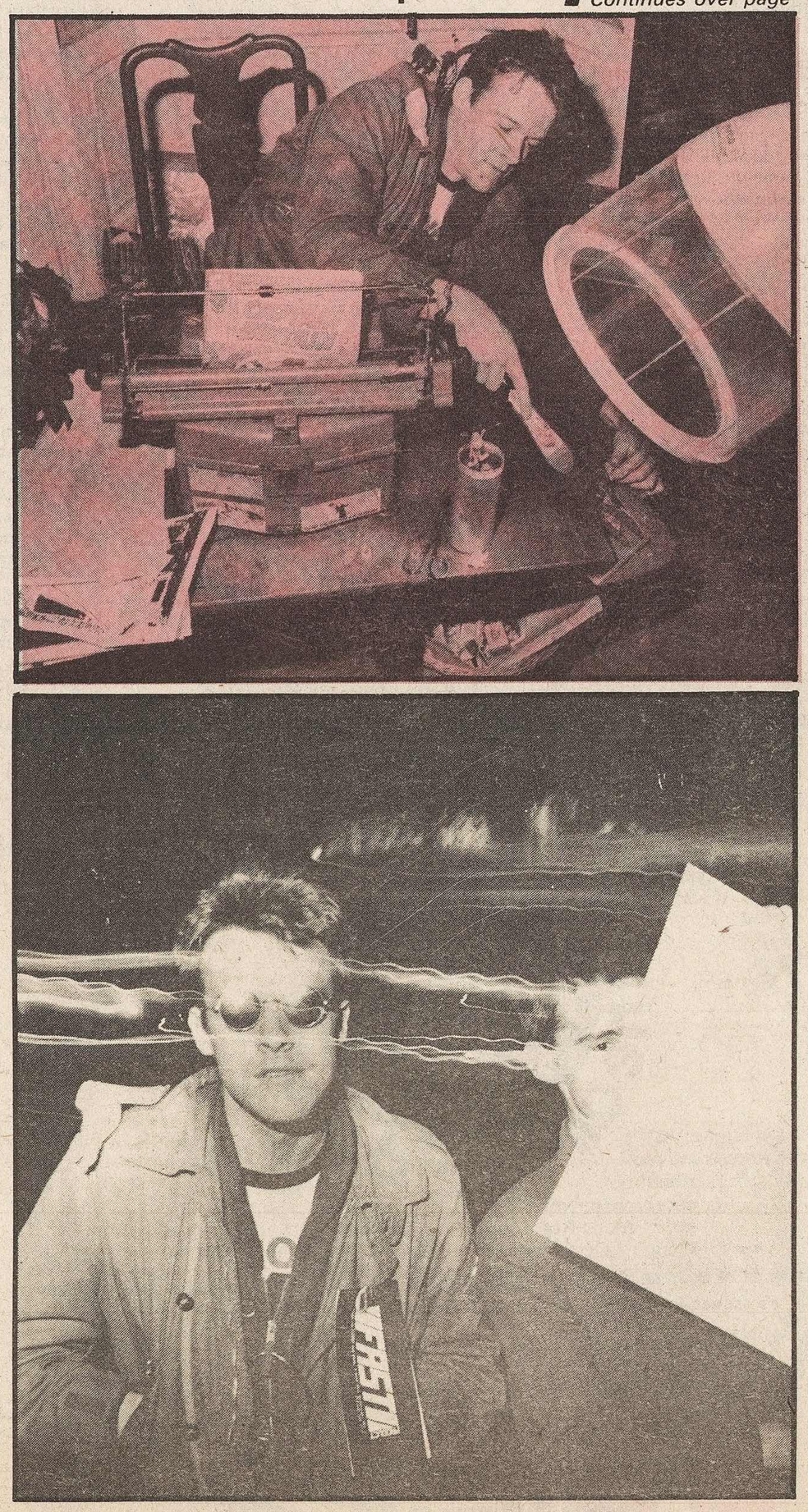

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aggressive identity as a record label fitted into that as well because we wanted people to be aware that to do that they'd got a record company and a record label, just to make people aware of all these steps."

(Shades of Bertolt Brecht, who wanted his audience to be aware of what they were watching.)

"In terms of who it's going to," Last proceeds with the quietly satisfied air of a man whose hunch has come off, "I was sure there were a lot of people who would love to be able to do what The Mekons are doing, and who would identify with that record just because of that. They'd want it just to show it could be done.

"At the same time, because it was so obviously crude, somebody who bought the record in that position would still want to go out and do it. The Mekons wouldn't be a *substitute* for them going out and doing it."

Last is convinced the exercise has been massively successful.

"They have encouraged an awful lot of bands. You'd be amazed at the number of really young bands who see The Mekons as being amazing. The fact that The Mekons have records out and continue to exist encourages an awful lot of people."

Suddenly the record that was so bad that no one would stock it doesn't seem such a loser after all.

The fact that it eventually sold 3,000 copies and that The Mekons' new single shipped all of its 5,000 pressing in a matter of days after its release stands as its on own testament to Last's courage and extraordinarily perceptive ideas.

THOUGH FAST Product are honest enough not to pose as complete altruists, or to be selfrighteous about it, they will help bands with the resources Fast Product are fortunate enough to be able to get hold of. Witness 2.3 (that's 'Two Point Three'), a Sheffield band discovered supporting The Rezillos at Sheffield.

A much more straightforward proposition — dryly described by Last as "a sigh of relief for everyone after The Mekons!" — they were like many a local band. "They'd built up a following in their district, and supported all the main bands when they came through. They were at a stage when they were looking for a single. We'd liked them, so we just thought it'd be good to do a single to help them."

The resulting single, "Where To Now?", was Fast Product's second package. Alas the title proved only too true, as the duo who wrote 2.3's material have now gone their separate ways.

Fast Product's two most successful bands in straightforward terms, The Human League and The Gang Of Four, have already featured in *NME* and will undoubtedly do so again. Little therefore needs to be said of them here, save that both bands were beneficiaries of Last's intuitive selection and packaging. (He had met neither band before deciding on the singles, being put in touch through 2.3 and The Mekons respectively.)

What is noteworthy, however, is that both bands share Fast Product's aggresive notion of actively intervening in the music business. The Human League, also now managed by Last, use prepared tapes and slides in their stage presentation. They have also always wanted a major contract and seem likely to get it as negotiations are already underway.

The Gang Of Four's negotiations with the posse of A&R scouts on their tails will doubtless take longer because of their commendably hard-headed attitude towards the business.

Meanwhile their Fast Product package includes the brilliant "Love Like Anthrax", a superb distillation of (yet again) Brecht's techniques of '*Verfremdung*' (literally, "Alienation") for rock music. Preceded by, and alternating with, crashing, reverberating electric guitar, one voice chants the unpleasant, disagreeable words about mental uneasiness over a not *too* easy melodic beat. Simultaneously, another voice clears its throat and recites the equipment involved in the recording process. Lose yourself in that if you can!!

BUT PERHAPS the most intriguing and unsettling of Fast Product's packages to date and possibly the most significant for the future has been their third, "The Quality Of Life". It's not a record but what might be loosely termed a cheap visual package.

It is just that, actually — a collection of nine Xeroxed pages of assorted collages in a plastic bag with some bits and pieces added in.

"We just put that out as instant something. If it's interesting, it's interesting. If it's not. People tend to look at it and think, 'Oh God — it must be like *The Secret Public* — it must have a very deep meaning. Which it doesn't

"It might have somewhere," Last adds as an afterthought, "but that's accidental."

Delving among the bag's contents, I extract a page of photos of German terrorists from a Sunday colour supplement. It is now labelled "entertainment". How come, Bob?

"The principle's contradiction. If you've got apparently contradicting things, you may find that in fact there's a lot more in common — or vice versa. Some things that apparently have something in common in fact have more contradictions."

And this, I ask, fishing out some tape and a flattened cake case packet?

"A bit of debris, isn't it?" Last replies, the calm detachment giving way to a hint of impatience. "All this is just reconstituted rubbish. In case you haven't cottoned on to that, you get an actual piece of rubbish just to remind you."

You are doing this, I take it, to make people think?

"Yeah", Last agrees. "I would like to think that all Fast Products make people think.

"I don't think it's a good idea as a general rule," he elaborates, "that the person who's manufacturing your package, your communication, should do all the work. The person who receives the package should have to do some work to make something of it. It's a fairly important point."

I hate to drag in Brecht again — well, I don't actually, but this apology may stop the more impatient of you from skipping to the end of this article — but the parallels with his '*Verfremdung*' are not easily ignored.

Both Brecht and Fast Product want to make people think, yet not appeal only to intellectuals. Both share a distaste for blind emotion in an audience and would wish them to be more aware of what they're experiencing, be it a play or a rock record, and to view it in a detached and critical spirit — a way they have never done before.

No coincidence, I think, that a framed tribute to the great man hangs elsewhere in the flat.

BUT SHOULD you think at this point, or any other, that Mr Last is being just a little on the arty side, then Mr Last would be more than a little upset . . .

On encountering elsewhere in the flat a room full of strange assemblages and artefacts — such as a women's salon hairdrier converted into a standard lamp — I innocently consider aloud that this is a very art school room and enquire whether Last is a product himself of that institution, which is only a few yards down the street?

Oops! Last positively fizzes with indignation. No, he *hasn't* been to art school and the idea gets on his nerves.

Bob Last, you see, doesn't find the idea of art a very *useful* one.

"Because art is a way of limiting. I can't see anything to recommend it at all, and it's very difficult if you start doing anything at all unusual or interesting — people can *isolate* it completely by claiming that it's art."

Bob Last has no wish to be so isolated.

"A lot of people have already decided quite categorically that Fast Product is a bit arty." Last sits up suddenly vehement. "They can fuck off if they want to think it's arty," he snaps. "That's out! If they live in a realm where they're looking out for arty things, that's their problem!"

Similarly, Bob Last has no time for being a collector's item. Each "Quality Of Life" package, for instance, carried a different piece of orange peel to make sure that *each* package was unique.

Resigned in advance to the idea that people will inevitably start to collect the set of Fast Products, he comforts himself with the knowledge that at least they'll have to do it his way.

"They're going to have to start collecting all the Fast Product promotion (material) too because *it's* all numbered. You *need* to have all our ads and handouts with the records to get the full flavour! Apart from the records, all the advertisements have a product number!"

This interrelation between product and packaging is further highlighted in the follow-up to "Quality Of Life" — "SeXex", a similar idea with a bigger budget and termed 'an instantprint visual package with badge'.

"It relates to all this product thing because it's creating almost an advertising and promotional campaign for a totally imaginary corporation, but the advertising *is* the product! If you thing of SeXex as a corporation, we've almost got round to problem of having to put out product at all!" A triumph for modern ingenuity . . .

How Bob Last *does* view the activities of Fast Product is by comparing them to those of an insect hopping about and biting the main body. He calls this being opportunist, which may be true, but it's also an opportunism that many record companies would dearly love to have.

AS FOR FUTURE packages, one probability is a single at some stage with The Scars, an Edinburgh band with a small but near fanatical following. The uncertain time schedule (a package has in fact been pencilled in since the summer) is due to The Scars' apparent total inability to handle what local infamy they have achieved.

They even provoked a Fast Product admirer like Paul Rambali to castigate them (correctly) for "shrieking their way through a set of glam rock contrivances" at the London evening of Fast Product bands last November, while Bob Last describes them as "an arrogant bunch of wankers".

However, The Scars do have a certain kind of awareness that sets them apart from the pack, plus a worthy Mekons-type of influence in saving other local bands from thrashing about with a set of Clash songs. Last, meanwhile, waits to "pick the right moment when they're on a relatively solid footing."

On the subject of other types of Fast Product packages for the future, he is studiedly non-committal — partly because he's afraid people would rip off his ideas and partly because he believes such previews to be "counter-productive", as people would then have expectations instead of taking the packages as they found them.

Bearing in mind that communication is the essence of Fast Product, it shouldn't be too surprising if Fast Product weren't selling records at all in two years time. Last is already unhappy at the split he sees developing between straight pop bands on one hand and experimental bands on the other, and he's apprehensive at the prospect of becoming some kind of A&R man extraordinaire for the weirdo bands, a six-month stepping-stone before handing over to a major.

"Right now the most likely thing seems to be films of some kind. But you never know — two years ago I wouldn't have thought the most likely thing was singles!"

But whatever medium he chooses, the product principle will remain.

"Because if you're going to communicate something to anyone, as far as I'm concerned if they take it as a commercial product rather than some great thing, they're going to be much less conned about it. If they like it and it actually does something for them or they find it interesting, it's going to be a whole lot more open. They're not going to think, 'Oh shit — I'd better find this interesting.' They'll think, 'This is just a commercial product.' People can just take it as it comes."

LAST'S CONTROLLING influence in the presentation of Fast Product's packages is clear enough, but pinning down his criteria in the crucial selection of what is to be packaged is much more difficult. Do the bands packaged by Fast Product have anything in common apart from the fact they appeal to Last?

For once even Bob Last is stuck.

"I think there probably is, but I don't know what it is.

"I think, when it comes down to it — obviously all these groups are doing something unusual and innovative — the one thing in common with all these groups that I put out is that they're *positive*, in the same way that Fast Product is *positive*. They're aware that music means records and records mean record companies, and there's a kind of awareness about that.

"They all have a positive idea towards packaging. They don't see packaging and all that side as a drag — they see it as a way of extending what they're doing.

"The one person whose way of working has been most influential is Frank Zappa — not necessarily what he produces, but the way he works. Everything he does is a part of a continual plan. That gave me a lot of my ideas a long time ago."

Last's other main influence, interestingly enough, is that other shrewd businessman and blatant system user, packager of concepts and marketeer of modern music, P-Funk's Bootsy Collins.

BOB LAST stands to become a very important and influential man of ideas. Already he's making new things happen in rock'n'roll while still a fringe figure. Where most musical mechanics simply tinker with the engine, Bob Last has gone and redesigned it. In doing so, he's forged a role akin to Jake Riviera's for his own inventive talents — that of the creative middleman between band and public.

Bob Last takes what is interesting and innovative, adds his own creative layer of packaging and finds a whole new market where none existed before. His ideas are a graphic demonstration that products and packages need not be mass-produced junk or trashy trimmings. While accepting the basics of business, the marketer too can be an agitator, a catalyst.

Pseud time again. In any assessment of the present value and future potential of new talent, comparisons are inevitable. (You'll never guess who's coming next.) While Bertolt Brecht's work was frequently allegorical and Bob Last's has no such hidden meanings, both are men of ideas who want their audiences to be stimulated, to have to think; without recourse to sloganeering or crusading to jar them into a sense of awareness and detachment; to make them conscious of the processes involved in bringing their entertainment before them.

If Bob Last and Fast Product are to develop fully, then sadly it's inevitable that they will have to move outside of the limitations of packaging rock music. But whatever medium they choose to move into, Last has the potential to be to that what Brecht was to the theatre. And that is no small beer.

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792 ROCK STARS IN SUICIDE HORROR

Yes, those are the headlines you may well be seeing next week — the week that NME publishes the results of its feared and influential Readers' Poll. The votes have all been counted, the computations have all been made, and the effects of the chemicals which alone made this mammoth task possible have finally worn off. And, Marmaduke or Vladimir or Murgatroyd or whatever your stupid name is, next week comes the Day of Reckoning.

We won't say the results are surprising. Neither do we predict that as many as 792 rock stars will, in fact, off themselves when apprised of the results. In fact, as nobody here has yet learned any details of the 1978 NME Readers' Poll, you'll agree that we're not in a position to say anything very definite at this point in time. Most likely a majority of us will *still* be unaware of the poll's results this time next month. But that's the job. Every man and woman here accepts this. We carry on regardless. No — don't thank us. It's nothing.

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS NME

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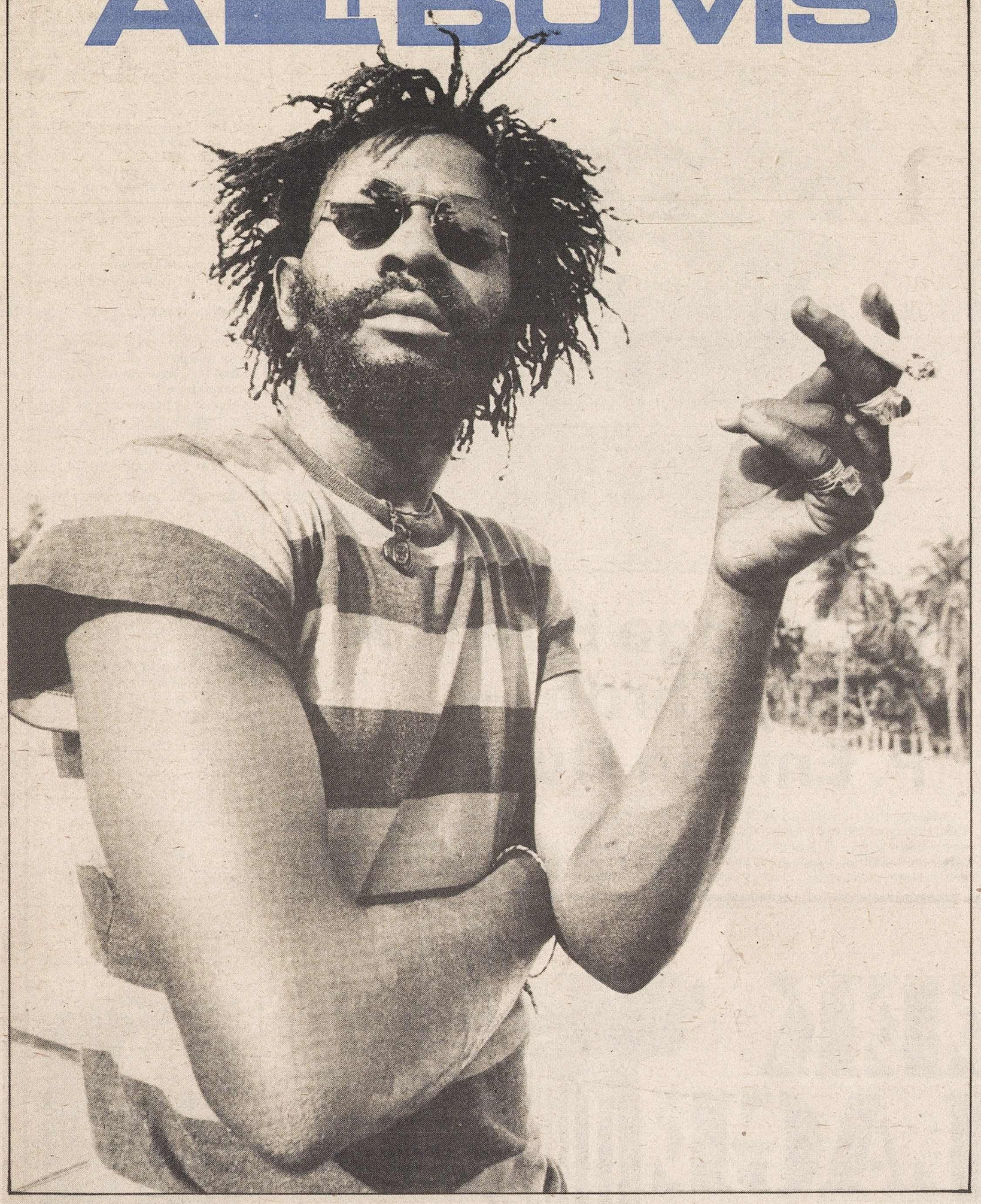


WINSTON RODNEY aka BURNING SPEAR exhibits the right way for a human. *Pic: ADRIAN BOOT*

Majestic, Mysterious

Burning Spear's Celestial Music Shimmers On

BURNING SPEAR
Social Living (1 Stop)

Get up, stand up, and speak the truth.

From parish to parish, from district to district, from village to village, from town to town, from countries to countries, from state to state . . . We suffer, we suffer, the whole o' we suffer. I and I, sons and daughters of the Most High Jah Ras Tafari, our hearts shall correspond and beat in one harmony. Sounds of the Burning Spear.

As the world's most vocal disciple of Marcus Garvey through this present tribulation, Winston Rodney the Burning Spear occupies an unique position in the reggae world.

Although lacking the mass appeal of a Bob Marley, or the idolatrous esteem of a Dennis Brown, or even the immediacy of a Culture, Burning Spear nevertheless contrives to assume a prestige beyond that of this exalted company.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly Winston Rodney's supreme achievement. His songs deal with truths and rights, but then so do many of the man's contempories. Perhaps his voice has much to do with it; certainly his majestic, swooping delivery is unlike that of any other artist, and proves an effectual vehicle for the dissemination of Marcus' message.

The title track of this album was issued as an Island 12" last year, and the album followed shortly after on Rodney's own Burning Spear label, bearing the title "Marcus Children". Repackaged in the UK, the set is identical to its Jamaican counterpart, except for its change of title, and different track order.

It's his seventh album — the last four, including his 'live' set, have all been issued on Island, being ?receeded by two albums recorded for Jamaican producer Coxsone Dodd.

"Sound Living" opens with the multi-tracked "Marcus Children Suffer", recorded at St. Peters Square during the singer's momentous tour of this town early last year, and features the musicianship of Aswad. To the accompaniment of primate howls and a steady musical foundation Spear claims *"Marcus Garvey did say, people, black peope you're gonna wait until your back is against the wall before you start to enquire whose fault."* Meanwhile his own voice chants an answering refrain with *"the whole o' we suffer"* in the background.

The title track strikes a more strident note, with percussion and a memorable horn phase combined to give complementary effect as Spear invokes the practice of what is generally known as Socialism; although as Mr. Rodney himself would likely tell you, he personally deals with no ism as such, nor schism either. *"It takes behaviour to get along,"* he advises, *"don't you know social living is the best?"* Dub effects are used sparingly and expediently.

Throughout the set Spear makes musical reference to the textured, jazz-tinged instrumentation that often crops up on roots Ras Tafarian offerings, the late Count Ossie's "Tales Of Mazambique" in particular. Tracks "Marcus Say Jah No Dead" and "Marcus Senior" exemplify this kind of arrangement, and also relate the lyrical progression of Rodney's work in this latter phase.

This is especially true if you compare the pair of titles on this LP that are re-recorded from Spear's Studio One days. "Nyah Keith" — originally "Zion Higher — and "Institution" — originally "Joe Frazier" — gain much in comparison, although I also feel they possibly lose a little edge against their Brentford Road counterparts as well.

"Marcus Children" is a difficult album to approach. It boasts no easy hooks or entrances to provide pigeonholes for the listener. It is also the most finished of all Burning Spear's productions. His most mature, and perhaps his best.

Penny Reel

THE JACKSONS
Destiny *(Epic)*

Each year, when the popularity polls roll around, way down in the best vocalist section we can find Bowie, Dylan and even Cornwall whilst my annual vote for Michael Jackson is as lonely as an armpit in a roomful of rosemary. Obligation standing fat in the way of discernment all over the country.

"Destiny" is the best Jacksons album since "Get It Together", since when they've lost Motown, Jermaine J, and the 'Five' handle. It's a bit of a shame it's only got one true side, even if it contains one cut worthy of anyone's track o' the year listing. "That's What You Get (For Being Polite)".

Side one — the side that doesn't — breaks open with the already burnt out welcome of "Blame It On The Boogie", written (and better recorded) by one Mick Jackson — a white man and therefore probably not one of the clan. It's followed by two forgettable ballads and ends on what was presumably meant to be a climax, the eight minute "Shake Your Body", which sadly is too much studio *parrrty* — like the later Tempts albums — to be anything other than dance for armchair disco swingers.

I'm worried about side one, doctor, but that side two! Such a Mac the Knife! The current single, a bit of a torch on the quiet, leads and it's the title track. It opens like James Taylor, crooning winsome, lying lyrics about not wanting the rich life and ends with sharp, slick, mid-paced funk — yet it all gells into something far more serious than the parts let on. Through the smooch energy of "Bless His Soul", and the so-so disco of "All Night Dancin'" (which is given a nice feel by an off-mike voice counting it in). The album ends on the already-trailered "That's What You Get . . .". A real pearl, this has been released on the rump end of the current 45, something akin to burying "Anarchy" beneath "Mary's Boy Child". "TWYG" appears at first a pretty insubstantial lilt, but after maybe four plays becomes a deep crush, a love affair to whistle while you get ready to go out on a Friday night. Buy that single and get the real Jacksons as good as anything they've done.

But "Destiny"? Well, it's a healthy pointer for us devotees, but I'll never impress you with it — it's just not that hot.

But on *that* track, I can see why I still 'waste' my vote. Michael Jackson don't need an engraved tankard — the geezer's the guvnor.

Danny Baker

ISRAEL VIBRATION
The Same Song *(Top Ranking)*

Current cult item on the local reggae scene, this debut album from the Israel Vibration trio augurs well for Jamaican music in 1979, with an even and enjoyable production.

There is little ready information available on the group. Israel Vibration emerged auspiciously in 1977 with a popular sound-system single called "Why Worry?", a Pablove Black production for the Twelve Tribes of Israel sect's Orthodox label — a choice outlet also responsible for Ewan Naphtali's sadly overlooked "Africa Awaiting Its Creators" classic the previous year — and belatedly followed up this effort with the equally good "Same Song" towards the latter part of 1978.

Both titles are included in this present set, and are in fact the highspots of the LP. Led by one C Spence — a vocalist in the Earl Zero vein — he also crops up again as featured singer and writer of "Ball Of Fire" and "I'll Go Through", further examples of the album's superior moments.

The music owes obvious debts to the group's association with former Studio One engineer Pablove Black, even though it's credited to uptown Top Ranking trickster smiling Tommy Cowan; and bears stylistic similarities to Black's work with Fred Locks, also a Twelve Tribes devotee.

Dense, mellow rhythms, lyrical use of horns and guitar, soft percussion, and fragile harmonies from the trio characterise the set's strength; its main weakness is in the lack of melodic content of certain of the songs.

But it hardly seems to matter. As Spence tells us on the title track, *"whether you're a bobo, or whether you're an orthodox, or whether you're a bingy natty dread, or whether you're a Twelve Tribes of Israel, we're all gonna sing the same song".*

Penny Reel

JIMMY CLIFF
Give Thanx *(Warner Bros)*

This return to commercial visibility from the fated Mr Cliff has been well-received in certain corners, but unfortunately seems little more than a muddled, embarrassing step into the FM muzink conspiracy rank it skanks.

Tracks such as "Meeting In Afrika" — whilst a man may not doubt Jimmy's (Muslim) faith — are plain puddles of fizzydrink-to-ethnic creation — zippy, pretty, purrfect programming for commercial radio. Backing tracking switches from L.A. suprasessioneers like Keltner, Lee, and Larson (cool) to Ras Michael and The Sons Of Negus (credibility), with the obligatory omnibus JA musicians in between — ecleticism or escape?

Hop de pop from Kingston to NY to West Coast. Jimmy really needs to decide what he wants to say, where he wants to say it, and who is best suited to bringing his messages over — here, belief in his belief is deflected.

Ian Penman

B. Urp

P. Orridge Bowls A Grisly Throb — P. Enman Ducks

THROBBING GRISTLE
D.O.A. (The Third And Final Report Of Throbbing Gristle) ***(Industrial Records)***

Structuralists believe that what we signify is a function of how we signify it. Simply, all we can say is determined by what we can assess or measure with our faculties or our instruments. Thus, finally, we don't know what it is we are talking about — all we know is what our faculties or instruments are, and of what they are capable.

This particular — dubious? — form of interpretation might lend itself well to a critique of the New Wave and the reactions, assumptions, and manipulations provoked by and present in it.

Numerous outlets for information and criticism — from McLaren's cunning Situationalism, through the national/music press distorted from various concurrent (social) phenomena into one image-fixated sensation, to the point where the post-'revolutionary' popular entertainers (Boomtown Rats, Stranglers, Clash, Banshees, Devoto, etc) can get on unquestioned using hollow and ill-reasoned self-justification and speculation as to the nature of their position in rock, and rock's position in a (wider) social context — become the basis for a new establishment.

Now, not only is rock reverting back to this capital-centred cycle of activity, appearance, apathy, but it is also in the process of metamorphosing into a medium so ill-constructed as to lend itself to the intervention of dilletantish — cum entrepeneurial — figures, who can be secure in the knowledge that rock allows as valid things which were long ago proven and understood redundant in other areas (of art). Private falsehoods perpetrated in the guise of public entertainment/enlightenment — the galleries are all empty and the captive audience is sought and found drooling in rock and its attendant media.

It's disturbing enough when these peripheral figures choose to simply foist their neuroses upon us (this applies as much to the rock press) and get taken seriously, but when ropey political cum philosophical claims are introduced — and get taken unquestioningly seriously — then it is time for a proper, rigorous appraisal both of their treatment of raw material, and our treatment of them.

Given Throbbing Gristle's history, such as it has been established in the public consciousness, it's quite surprising that they have been as successful as they have in their ambiguous infiltration into rock.

Genesis P. Orridge and Throbbing Gristle have never made any attempt to disguise or discard their past, it has simply been elevated from background material to backdrop.

It is a past spilling over with all manner of ill sorted associations located in all manner of contextual histories, the common strand being an assault on social complacency and those of society's taboos, attitudes and crimes which are a product of complacency.

This is the realm of contemporary "performance art": eating, vomiting, shitting, sitting, digging, or exhibiting used tampons is a *creative* activity, so perceived only if and because the agent of the work is in possession — such irony! — of a bourgeois art education.

Claims as to the validity of Throbbing Gristle centre around their purported "parody" of the ways and means of rock music and the rock music business. But this in itself must presuppose the validity of such parody, presuppose that it has tangible consequence and implication, and thus circumvents the possibility of rock music as a form of communication in which the distortions of its structure might be overcome.

Throbbing Gristle as a framework through which moments of improvised music might take place? Well, the base concept is nothing new. The murky electronic disembowelments which pass for Throbbing Gristle's "improvised" music have been heard in previous manifestations where there was more sense of purpose and less pretence. Faust didn't send out paedophiliac joke postcards. . .

More to the point, the omnipresent stifling air of depreciation — self and others — drags most songs down to a muddled and crass level of random-shock and atrophied-amorality — William Burroughs, the whole post-Beckett post-Kafka literature of and for the campus lecturer.

Who in the end is shocked by all this anyway? The smug end of the "avant garde" are shocked by *nothing*, my dears, and I sincerely hope that most thinking people credit themselves with a sight more lucidity than *that* kind of a coterie. That leaves the 14 year old kids who still wear swastikas to "punk" gigs, and *they'll* think all of this is just dinky, whether or not Genesis P Orridge's references to Charles Manson, Gary Gilmore, the Moors Murderers, and German extermination camps are all conceptually "valid" . . .

So, who cares if "D.o.A." *is* the ultimate Rock Album parody (down to perverse pseudo-Hipgnosis cover and absurd —speeded up — inclusion of A Single)? Whether or not it *is* the authentic sonic approximation of decadence? Surely we should be doing more than merely *approximating* . . . *is* this rock music? Rock music as it is reported (by people who stand to gain reputations as valid cultural systems analysts)? Rock music which, in essence, doesn't move beyond *"It's a rat trap: and we've been caught."*?

Nought music?

Ian Penman

Ha ha — they're slagging me off and I'm number 20 in the charts.

WINGS
Wings Greatest ***(MPL)***

Paul McCartney has this uncanny knack for conceiving whimsical little notions and turning them into huge hits. And he doesn't even drink. Well, hardly, and he doesn't care much for those who do.

Which is weird, because the biggest selling UK single of all time (included here) is "Mull Of Kintyre", and it's only tolerable if the listener is half hammered and thus susceptible to its dirge-like qualities.

"Wings Greatest" is a whole clump of those irritating songs with which Ringo used to interrupt proper Beatles albums. And it sure reminds you why "Junior's Farm" bombed out.

Selections range from that naughty "Hi Hi Hi" through the blancmangey "With A Little Luck". Halfway decent material like "Band On The Run" and "Jet" gets a look in, too, and a horrible poster comes inside the horrible sleeve.

Fascinating stuff. Ever so clever. Just like Schubert. Lennon should turn in his tomb.

Monty Smith
(Record token winner)

IMPORTS

Normally, the import situation goes phut around this time and everyone takes time to recharge their batteries. But this year, the pressure has remained high — and certainly the arrival of **Dylan's** "Live At Budokan" (CBS/Sony) has much to do with this, for dealers everywhere are reporting a massive demand for the double. Flyover Records have shipped in some 3,600 copies to date in an attempt to fulfill orders.

However, that's not the whole ballgame, for Virgin have added to the furore by lugging in the whole of **Mike Nesmith's** Pacific Arts catalogue, which they're currently retailing at £4.99 a throw. Doubtless, Nes freaks who didn't latch on to his "The Wichita Train Whistle Sings" (PACB 7-113) when it was released here on Dot, will now make a grab at the newly packaged version — even though the music (big band versions of Nes material arranged by Nesmith and Shorty Rogers) still sounds as awful as ever.

Those who are a bit more discerning will then be better advised to invest in a copy of "Rank Strangers" (PAC 7-112), which features a new band headed by ex-Kaleidescope and Dirt Band cohort **Chris Darrow.** Though seemingly lacklustre material-wise — would you go overboard about a track listing that includes "Ragtime Cowboy Joe" and "Tumbling Tumbleweeds"? — the harmony vocals have that same sort of down-homey appeal that made the McGarrigles' first shot such an attractive proposition.

Also on the Pacific Arts list is "Roast Beef" (PAC7 108), a 14-tracker by **Biff Rose;** "Swammiji" (PACR 7 - 105), a Nesmith production that turns on the incense for Swami Nadabrahmananda; "New Moon In Zytron" (PACB 7 - 120), on which percussionist/vocalist **James Zitro** meets jazz saxophonist **David Liebman;** "Jumping Mouse" (PAC 7 - 109), by **Joyce Yarrow;** "The Prison" (PAC 11-101A) a lower priced album-only version of Nesmith's one-time de-luxe boxed job; and "Eclipse" (PACR 7 - 119), fourth album by **Hamza El Din,** a band who are hot in the Sudan (well, isn't everybody?).

All of which forms a neat link with "Pyramids", the opening cut on "Sky Music" (Vanguard), the latest offering from keyboardsman **Mike Mandel,** which has spent some time on my turntable during the past week. Mandel, as the history class will remember, once formed a supergroup with Jack Bruce, Larry Coryell and Mitch Mitchell and one way or another, hasn't got a bad track record.

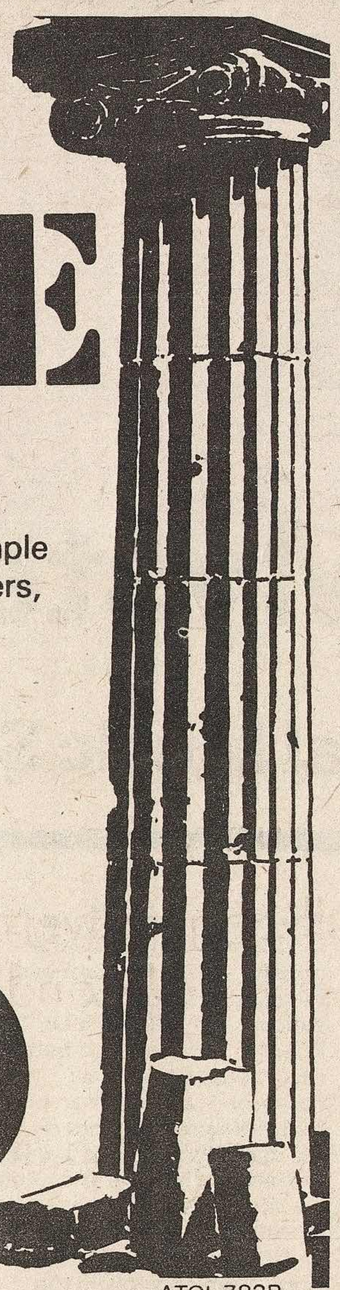
"Sky Music" isn't one of his more important statements. In fact, it's the easy way home — disco-jazz with neat-treat versions of ballads such as Billy Joel's "Just The Way You Are" tossed in as rest-beds. Nevertheless, the album has its fair share of tasty moments, most of them provided by tenor-man Gary Anderson.

Meanwhile, someone's just snuck me a note to the effect that Mike, of Country Room fame, is to import Sierra-Briar's **"Gram Parsons** — The Folk Year, Vol.1", which features Parsons and **The Shilos,** the band he led on the East Coast coffee house circuit during the mid-'60s.

Packaged along with the album (it says here) will be an in-depth booklet consisting of rare photographs, unreleased poetry and songs from Parsons' personal collection, plus comprehensive notes compiled from interviews with Parsons' friends, family and others. Pass the cheque book, Emmylou!

Fred Dellar

GREEK VILLAGE



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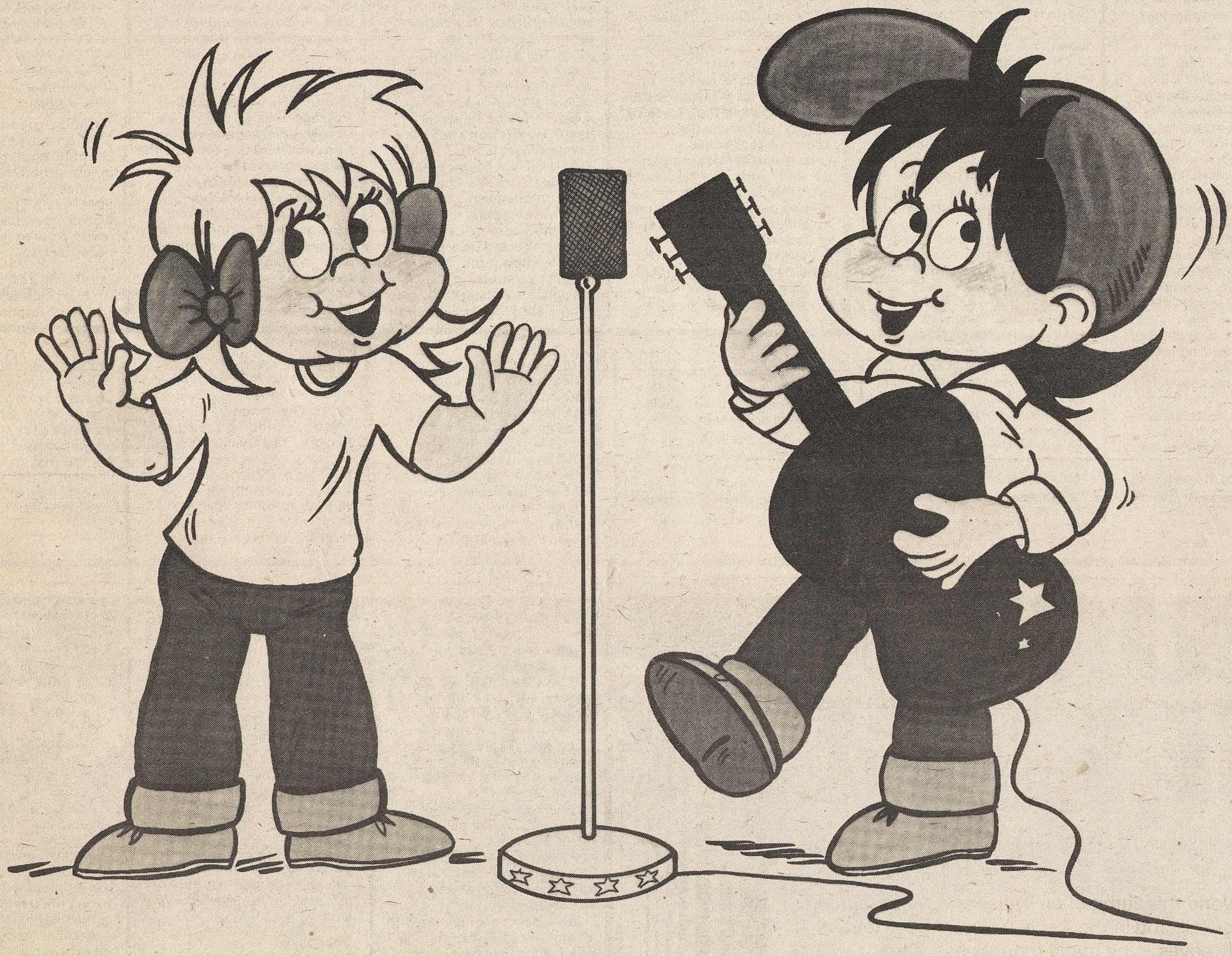

This month sees the launch of the most ambitious search for talent ever attempted within the entertainment industry.

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TINA CHARLES
Greatest Hits *(CBS)*
SHOWADDYWADDY Greatest Hits 1976-1978 *(Arista)*

After sublime black-dance-music but before white disco became a money maker or something for boring and embarrassed ex-hippe types to write jaded love sonnets to, there was Biddu moulding Tina, a one-eyed man in the land of the blind leading the missing link between Demis Roussos and Donna Summer.

For your information there's just three chart hits here, but I don't care if you don't because the rest holds numerous turntable hits from the early mid-'70s for you to feel at home with like old causes and letters. Tina Charles pretty much articulates the romance-lives of popular, working-class English city schoolgirls in the endless, comfy, early years of the decade better than anyone has, though this is maybe accidental.

"Rendezvous," "You Set My Heart On Fire," "I'll Go Where Your Music Takes Me" and "Love Bug/Sweets For My Sweet" (an immortal homage from disco to pop) are pure gold for under-18s who've been in love since break-time. No matter that Biddu's arrangements featured the most MOR and end-of-the-pier backing tracks that a name disco artiste ever sangalongwith. Strident eh-by-gum brass all over the show, tacky Caribbean steel drum effectettes, E.L.E.C.T.R.O.N.I.C.S still a filthy word — nothing modern here, android. A 1975 soundtrack, and beautiful because of it.

Biddu also had an awful tendency to write an Indian's eye-view of the teenage *Carry On,* coming up with submissive theatricals like the hit "Dance Little Lady Dance" and the un-hit "Dr Love" — *"I've always had a weakness/For a man in uniform"*. Well, really, I ask you! — which thankfully were cancelled out by the real heroes of Tina Charles career, Bolden and Robinson.

Who knows on whose coffee tables their names could have ended up if they'd just stretched it out a little longer and louder? As it was, they merely wrote Tina's two remaining great hits: the stroppy, boppy, equal-night-rights of "Love Me Like A Lover", also her first, all-important hit "I Love To Love", the stretch and swing in her voice like a fame fanatic or an old trooper, and her gorgeous flip "Rendezvous". Their songs really realise and cater to the essential *yearning* that made up the main part of Tina Charles voice.

Lots of girl singers try to sound "yearning", it being commercially good and approved for a girl singer to sound this way. But Tina Charles really *does* yearn, she is small and podgy and she doesn't have much of a vocal range but she was desperate, which means a lot — "You know you've only got one chance!". She was the monkey to Biddu's organ-grinder, she could have no more dreamed of asking for complete artistic control than flown in the sky.

The latest single, released this summer, is quite sad. "Makin' All The Right Moves" hightails it out of disco into *New Faces* pop-scum with a pub piano and *"Her babe/Think of me like blueberry pie."* It was an unqualified disaster, both chart and turntable-wise. Tough luck, Tina. I'm sorry, but when I used to see you on *Top Of The Pops* I could have sworn you were waving.

Despite dumb appearances, one is not naive enough to think that this summary of Charles' career was put out to triumph over Travolta or show thick intellectuals the error of their ears. Of course, it was for money.

Showaddywaddy already have their *second* "Greatest Hits" album out, if you please. They are a popular band among working-class youngsters (particularly boys) but, somewhat miraculously for such an inverted snob as myself, I find them draggy and barely worth manipulating ink on.

But — though I loathe their unpleasant, middle-aged grave-robbing, I just found out that Showaddywaddy can write *very* good songs of their own. This album comprises eight hits and four self-written songs, which just about sums up what Showaddywaddy consider themselves capable of. They probably stick their own stuff out on B-sides to be on the safe side.

"Paint Your Picture" is a dead ringer for Blue Oyster Cult's "Astronomy," the lead 'Waddy sounding but *exactly* like old Erick Oyster, "You Will Lose Your Love Tomorrow" is a leisurely romance rebuke from Buddy Holly to Heatwave, while "Lookin' Back" and "Go Johnny Go" (that last title being the catchline for the first, too) are unbelievable coming from Showaddywaddy: *real* pure pop (tunes, youth, sorrow, a total lack of cynicism) disguised by drapes. Rash damsel that I am, I would say "Lookin' Back" is better than *any* '50s rock'n'roll song.

Great stuff!

Julie Burchill

DAME EDNA EVERAGE
The Sound Of Edna *(Charisma)*
IVOR BIGGUN
The Winker's Album *(Beggar's Banquet)*
THE PORK DUKES
The Pork Dukes *(Wood Records)*
THE BARRON KNIGHTS
Night Gallery *(Epic)*

Being funny on vinyl is about as easy as trying to keep a clean sheet against West Bromwich Albion. And there's some real relegation fodder here.

The Barron Knights used to think Norman Wisdom was funny, so it's not surprising that they make The Smothers Bros seem like Flanders & Swann. I'm not saying that listening to Cheech & Chong is funnier than "Night Gallery", but sometimes it seems like it. The targets for their 'wicked' ribbing are invariably innocuous — Hamlet cigars, *Blue Peter,* "The Floral Dance", folk singers, decimalisation and "Up Town Top Ranking" *("Boy scouts out camping/Knife, fork and tin").*

The one bit that makes me laugh occurs in the "Taste Of Aggro" hit (where the audience reaction is a constant irritant), during the dense Smurfs piss-take, but I probably find this funny merely because I was brung up in Forest 'ill, the posh end of Catford.

Even more dismal fare is provided by The Pork Dukes. Couched in anonymity and pressed on gruesome pink vinyl, the album is replete with tame quasi-punk, wet HM and ropey R&B licks, all as stale as Boxing Day dinners. Since the music is so mundane and the words aren't particularly amusing (unless an indiscriminate use of 'naughty' phrases is supposed to be funny in itself), I really don't see the point of this album.

Dame Edna comes over all unnecessary as she chats with some Woodstock survivors.

At least Ivor Biggun realises that his "Winker's Album" shouldn't be played to minors, miners or mynahs. His crummy punning, delivered in a coyly affected George Formby monotone, soon becomes a strain on the lugs, though the innocent way he 'sings' about Mr Fellatio the ice cream man and suchlike does, at times, attain a fragile gauche charm. He's a bit of a liberal, too: *"I'm a wanker! I'm a wanker!/And it does me good, like it bloody well should!"*

No such *unnecessary* language from Dame Edna Everage who, on the immaculately conceived "Sound Of Edna", remains the very essence of taste and decorum. She compares herself to Ethel Merman, Barbara Cartland, Michael York and Betty Windsor ("a courageous little creature who lives in a period house"), and even does two songs in a vaguely rock vein — "Every Mother Wants A Boy Like Elton" and Edna Evil's "S&M Lady". The Classic "Niceness" helps you put your finger on her greatest single asset: *"You may be black or tinted and eat naught but rice/But if you clean your teeth three times a day, the chances are you're nice".*

She's a grandiose Martin Mull, an extremely rude Joyce Grenfell, apologising for her innate superiority as she "envies even your humdrum little lives". The felicity with words is awesome, the revue-style music horrendous.

Barry Humphries really must be some kind of genius.

Monty Smith

Sally Oldfield
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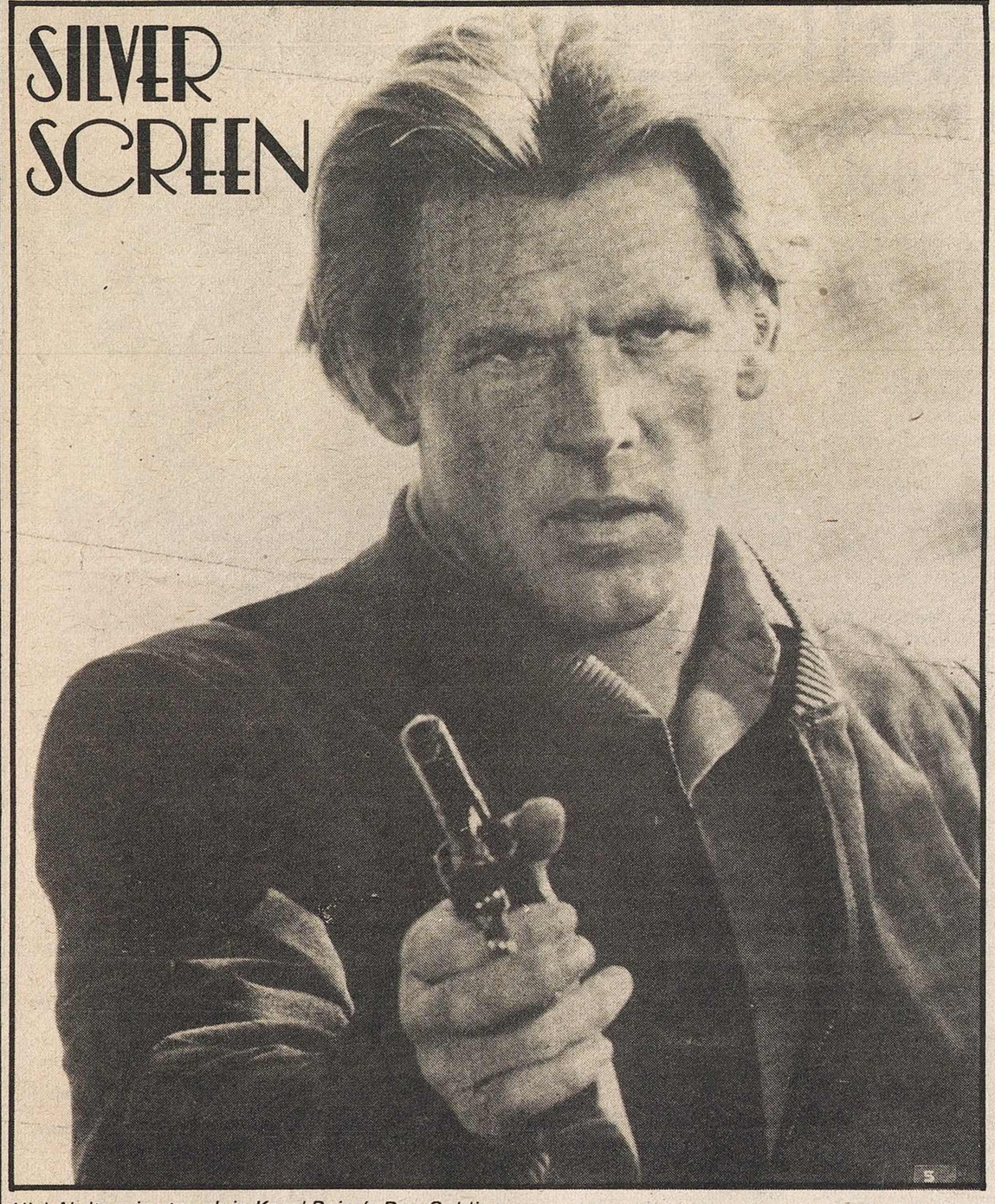

Nick Nolte cries tough in Karel Reisz's Dog Soldiers

Drugs of War

Dog Soldiers

Directed by Karel Reisz
Starring Nick Nolte, Michael Moriaty and Tuesday Weld
(United Artists)

Everywhere in the world this film, based on the Robert Stone novel, is called *Dog Soldiers*. Everywhere, that is, except its country of origin, the Unites States. There it is called *Who'll Stop The Rain,* after the Creedence Clearwater Revival song, heard intermittently throughout.

The reason for this change was that the distributors feared the US public had already endured enough harrowing films about the Vietnam War and its aftermath, and that another one just now would not be a commercial proposition. (And, after all, the US is no doubt brim-full of people who never regarded the Vietnam War as anything other than a commercial proposition . . .)

However, *Who'll Stop The Rain* makes an equally apt title for a movie which uses Vietnam as its background and subsequently goes on to show the bitter harvest that has been reaped back home.

So what's new? Clearly, on one level, *Dog Soldiers* just reiterates standard Vietnam remorse, and as such probably says less about its subject than recent comparable movies. Perhaps for once Karel Reisz has paid the penalty for his fastidiously slow approach to movie-making. (This is only his fifth since *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning* in 1960.)

What happens, briefly, is this. A war photographer (Michael Moriaty) who isn't directly engaged in combat, but who's nevertheless seen too much action ("There are no more cheap morals I can draw from this lousy war") opts to leave, compensating himself for his ordeal by bringing back two kilos of heroin as an investment for his future. Being largely feckless, he persuades a long-time army buddy (Nick Nolte) to act as courier. The action then switches to San Francisco, where all discover that you can't leave behind the Vietnam War just by putting half the globe between yourself and South East Asia.

Plans to dispose of the heroin are frustrated at the outset, and Moriaty realises that life is equally nasty back in the U.S.A. The only difference is that now he can share it with his wife (Tuesday Weld).

Gradually, the movie reduces its options, and develops into a chase film, with an ending that combines the psychedelic excesses of some films of the period with a situation reminiscent of the climax of the Martin Ritt/Paul Newman movie, *Hombre.*

It could almost be argued that *Dog Soldiers* had *degenerated* into an adventure story — though that would be criticism of the meanest sort. Certainly, Reisz doesn't seem to play all the cards that he holds at the outset, but equally the film — with a palpable atmosphere of doom enshrouding it — is compelling enough the way he has chosen to make it.

One weakness of the scenario is that the supposedly close relationship between Nolte and Moriaty is never established satisfactorily, which is a pity because they both offer outstanding performances, as does Tuesday Weld, one of the few actresses whose career survived a co-starring role in an Elvis Presley movie.

The soundtrack, incidentally, including Spencer Davis' "Gimme Some Lovin' " as well as selections from the Creedence catalogue, seems particularly well chosen, firmly establishing the period without resorting to sloaneering anti-war tracts of that time.

Bob Woffinden

Bujold cavorts in Coma

The First Great Train Robbery

Written and directed by Michael Crichton
Starring Sean Connery and Donald Sutherland
(United Artists)

Coma

Written and directed by Michael Crichton
Starring Genevieve Bujold and Michael Douglas
(CIC)

One of the most interesting of the younger American directors is Michael Crichton, whose two latest works have been released within six weeks of each other.

Not only is he a best-selling author, he's a fully qualified doctor of medicine. Thus an engaging command of authoritative-sounding gobbledy-gook permeates his novels, most notably in the science-factional *Andromeda Strain* and *The Terminal Man.* His only previous feature — the excellent *Westworld,* which escaped in 1973 — was sharp enough to sustain belief in a story of rebellious robots and *Coma* (appropriately enough, *the* sleeper of '78) confirms Crichton's ability to fashion fresh thrills out of essentially melodramatic material.

And his doctor heroine — the pert Genevieve Bujold, receiving scant support from colleague / boyfriend, the pat Michael Douglas, in her quest to uncover a sinister conspiracy in their Boston training hospital — quietly achieves substantially more in the way of 'movies treating women as people' than a dozen or more of last year's 'liberally conscious' soap operas like *The Turning Point* and *An Unmarried Woman.*

As increasingly more patients slip into terminal comas during relatively minor operations, you'd have to be as dense as Mr Douglas not to realise that something pretty horrible is going on. With the malignantly benign Richard Widmark and the intensely glowering Rip Torn as co-stars, you can rest assured there is.

No such chills in *The First Great Train Robbery,* I'm afraid, but Crichton's latest exercise in suspense has a wayward charm of its own. Victorian England is lovingly recreated (in Ireland, naturally) only for our trio of trepid heroes — plotting to relieve the London-Folkestone train of its gold bullion shipment — to talk like they'd just stepped in off *The Sweeney* lot. And the dour Mr Connery is curiously at odds with the jokey Mr Sutherland, whose very Oirish 'cockney' lends even less conviction to the capers.

The robbery itself, though, is a treat, Connery performing all manner of foolish and dangerous stunts atop a moving train, oft times coming *this* close to being topped by low-flying bridges. He should worry — his mistress is played by Lesley-Anne Down (well known for *Upstairs Downstairs* and being not exactly unattractive to men etc).

Good fun — a shame that train robbers are last year's thing.

Monty Smith

Force 10 From Navarone

Directed by Guy Hamilton
Starring Robert Shaw and Edward Fox
(Columbia)

In these times of political embarrassment, with heavy EEC financial burdens to be shouldered, and EMS quandaries to be resolved, it must be reassuring for the British to wallow in war films and contemplate happier times when *we* had *them* over a barrel.

In any case, creating a sequel to the box-office smash *The Guns Of Navarone* was a sound idea, though taking 17 years over it is clearly another matter altogether. Not to worry — if you missed *The Guns* (through circumstances such as not having been born, for example), *Force 10* obligingly recaps at the beginning.

It will be noted, however, that Gregory Peck and David Niven have been transmuted into Robert Shaw and Edward Fox. Sadly, the former didn't see this one out, his own capacity for survival not matching that of his character here, Major Mallory, and one of the scenes has been shot with a stand-in.

Though it's disappointing that such a varied career should end with such a routine (nay, lame) movie, at least his and Fox's presence help to illuminate it. Given the formidable handicap of an Alastair MacLean story, they bite the bullet, and perform with stolid professionalism, frequently rescuing a functional screenplay and a limp scenario.

Codename Force 10 incorporates two inter-linked missions. Shaw and Fox are the British half of the operations, assigned to clear up some long-time unfinished business from Navarone. Harrison Ford, interrupting the no-doubt tedious task of counting his *Star Wars* royalties, heads the American team — their expedition, supposedly Very Secret, transpires to be nothing more original than blowing up a bridge.

Since almost a generation separates this from its prestigious forebear, one might have expected differences in style. In fact, there are virtually none. What there are seem merely concessions to modern times — bare breasts (and nice ones, too, courtesy of petite Barbara Bach), a Black American (Carl Weathers) and a case of explosive gimmickry carried by Fox which is referred to, post-Watergate fashion, as his box of dirty tricks.

Otherwise, it's a perfectly conventional war-film about conventional warfare. Like Hoovers, they've been making them this way for yonks, and the only difference is that these days they're noisier.

Bob Woffinden

The Rain People

Directed by Francis Ford Coppola
Starring Shirley Knight, James Caan and Robert Duvall
(Warner Bros)

The Rain People begins in the street, New York's autumn fading, and moves from morning industry over surfaces and light rain, savouring and measuring colourlessness and cohesion, into a bedroom's stuffier sensuality — exterior to interior life.

Symbols and sequences throughout are similarly slanted, simply, between diagram and drift. An obvious exercise, but born of affection and stranger for it.

The Rain People was made in 1969 — Coppola's shaft of air between the kitsch of *Finian's Rainbow* and *The Godfather*'s ketchup — a moddy, pastel, 'road' movie, of the time but not hackneyed enough for the tastes of Warner Bros and the American public; it flopped.

Duvall and Knight come to, er, grips in The Rain People

Shirley Knight's pregnant housewife leaves hubby and home for the highway — just like that, one morning — maybe not for good, but for her own immediate good. The feel of vulnerability, routine and lovelessness is more substantial than nice, less than neurotic, avoiding both the late '70s *jolie* jogging journal *and* the Nordic casualty ward pacing of things — a winning schizophrenic accent (Knight refers to herself as *she* for a lot of the film).

She picks up a hitch hiker (Caan) and attempts to seduce/humiliate him in a mortal bedroom — at which point she realises the beefcake has a damaged brain (football accident), a consequently childish awareness of the world, and a one thousand dollar pay off from his *alma mater.*

Coppola traces the underlying patriachal/matriachal bumps and bruises here: mother-to-be without a husband, child (Caan) without parents, and father (Duvall's highway cop, living in a trailer with his young daughter) who has lost a wife.

The basis of *The Rain People* was an old college script and the director's feelings for Shirley Knight — the film as Coppola's baby? — and, although hardly a *Performance,* it's more than slight and of a status above cult (this, ten years late, is its first release in Britain). The outcome of the plot seems more Scorcese than sexual politics; I guess you find that either ragged or realistic.

Ian Penman

NATIONWIDE GIG GUIDE

RORY GALLAGHER

Rory in town, UFO set out

ANOTHER fairly quiet week on the circuit, through things should start improving by next week — when the colleges are back in full swing again, and most bands have finally emerged from their Christmas hibernation.

Meanwhile, we have one major tour starting this weekend, and that's by the ever-welcome UFO outfit. They're a band of considerable reputation on the international market, but possibly underrated here at home. Weather conditions permitting, they begin their lengthy schedule with concerts at Bracknell (Saturday), Liverpool (Sunday) and Carlisle (Tuesday).

RORY GALLAGHER reaches the climax of his two-leg U.K. tour, when he plays a string of three nights at London's Hammersmith Odeon starting on Friday. And this is followed by gigs in Ipswich (Tuesday) and Brighton (Wednesday). Bram Tchaikovsky, both the axeman and the band that bears his name, are again the support act.

Most intriguing one-off of the week crops up tonight (Thursday) when those near-legendary U.S. rockers DANNY & THE JUNIORS pay their first-ever visit to this country to headline a special at London's Royalty Ballroom.

Finally, a reminder that ELVIS COSTELLO & The Attractions continue their extensive tour, this week visiting Newcastle (Thursday), Glasgow (Friday), Aberdeen (Saturday), Dundee (Sunday), Edinburgh (Monday and Tuesday) and Preston (Wednesday), supported by Richard Hell & The Voidoids and John Cooper Clarke.

UFO's PHIL MOGG

Thursday

Birmingham Barbarella's: **Pursey's Package with Angelic Upstarts / The Invaders**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Orphan**
Birmingham The Bell: **The Clerks**
Brighton Alhambra: **Fan Club**
Bristol Granary: **After The Fire**
Bristol Polytechnic: **Chantilly Lace**
Burntwood Troubadour: **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Canterbury College of Art: **Crazy Cavan 'n' The Rhythm Rockers**
Epsom School of Art and Design: **Warm Jets/Staa Marx**
High Wycombe Nags Head: **Straight 8**
Leeds Fan Club: **Adam and The Ants**
Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **The Donkeys**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Howard Ellis Band**
London Camden Brecknock: **Sucker**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Split Rivitt**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Immigrant**
London Ealing College: **Cygnus**
London Hammersmith The Rutland: **Fred Rickshaw's Hot Goolies**
London Hammersmith The Swan: **Skin Deep**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **Local Operator**
London Holloway North Polytechnic: **The Soft Boys/Charge/Resisters/The Passions**
London Islington Hope and Anchor: **The Damned**
London Islington Oxford Arms: **Brett Marvin and The Thunderbolts**
London Kennington The Cricketers: **Manyana**
London Kensington De Villiers Bar: **Gold Dust Twins**
London Kensington Imperial College: **The Oval Stageshow**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Streetband**
London Marquee Club: **The Drones**
London N.11 Orange Tree: **Ram**
London Old Kent Rd. Thomas A'Beckett: **Tour De Force**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Kathy Stobart Quintet**
London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: **Danny and The Juniors**
London Tottenham The Spurs: **Agenda**
Macclesfield Krumbles: **The Accelerators**
Manchester Mayflower Club: **Let The Good Times Roll**
Newcastle City Hall: **Elvis Costello and The Attractions/Richard Hell and The Voidoids/John Cooper Clarke**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Hormones**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Lap Region**
Plymouth Polytechnic: **The Drill**
Poynton Folk Centre: **Alastair Webster/Hughes Brothers**
York Revolution Club: **Fhenny and The Goys**

Friday

Birmingham Barbarella's: **The Slits**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Bright Eyes**
Birmingham Elizabethan Days: **Bad Earth**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Spitfire**
Birmingham The Sheldon: **Orphan**
Bradford Royal Standard: **Adam & The Ants**
Brighton Alhambra: **El Seven**
Burnt Troubadour: **Ocean Boulevard.**
Cardiff University: **UFO**
Glasgow Apollo Centre: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Richard Hell & The Voidoids/John Cooper Clarke**
Glasgow Strathclyde University (lunchtime) and Fife St. Andrew's University (evening): **The Trendies**
Harrogate Qui-Bel Restaurant: **Knife Edge**
Harrow College of Higher Education: **Desmond Dekker/Split Rivitt**
Harrow The Havelock: **The Bozos**
Hatfield Polytechnic: **After The Fire**
Kettering Windmill Club: **Bearshank Band**
Knaresborough Folk Club: **Mick Ryan & John Burge**
Lancaster Football Club: **Anniversary**
Leeds Polytechnic: **The Donkeys**
Leeds Trinity & All Saints: **Hot Water**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Alwoodley Jets**
Liverpool C.F. Mott College: **The Drill**
London Acton King's Head: **Paz**
London Battersea Arts Centre: **Warm Jets/Staa Marx**
London Battersea Town Hall: **Alex Welsh Band**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Local Operator**
London Camden Southampton Arms: **Jellyroll Blues Band**
London East Ham Ruskin Arms: **Dog Watch**
London Elephant & Castle Southbank Polytechnic: **Simon Townshend Band**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Rory Gallagher/Bram Tchaikovsky**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **The Soft Boys**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Joe Jackson Band**
London New Barnet Duke of Lancaster: **John Grimaldi's Cheap Flights**
London New Cross Lawrie Grove Hall: **Crazy Cavan 'n' The Rhythm Rockers**
London Notting Hill Old Swan: **Rednite**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Greig & Nigel's Folk and Blues Night**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Johnny M & The Midnite Men**
London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: **Chris Hill**
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: **The Drones**
Manchester Wythenshawe College: **Joy Division**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Last Call**
Nottingham Sandpiper: **The Vye**
Oxford USAF Upper Heyford: **Strange Days**
Oxford Westminster College: **Tribesman**
Stafford North Staffs Polytechnic: **Streetband**
Winsford The Barn: **The Shattered Dolls**
York Revolution Club: **The Mods**

Saturday

Aberdeen Capitol Theatre: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Richard Hell & The Voidoids/John Cooper Clarke**
Aldenham Red Lion: **The Secret Seven**
Barkingside Old Maypole Club: **Matchbox**
Birmingham Barbarella's: **Ramrod**
Birmingham (King's Heath) Hare and Hounds: **Telephone Bill & The Smooth Operators**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Special Clinic**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **School Sports**
Bolton Institute of Technology: **The Drill**
Bracknell Bridge House: **El Seven**
Bracknell Sports Centre: **UFO**
Bristol Crown Cellar Bar: **The Wild Beasts**
Coventry Warwick University: **World Service**
Dartford Princes Hotel: **The Works**
Derby Lonsdale College: **After The Fire**
Eastbourne Lottbridge Arms: **Nightrider**
Gosport John Peel: **The Piranhas**
Leeds Royal Park Hotel: **Agony Column**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Juggernaut**
Leicester Polytechnic: **Streetband**
London Battersea Arts Centre: **John Stevens' Away**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Hot Water**
London Camden Electric Ballroom: **The Bishops**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Zaine Griff**
London Chelsea The Wheatsheaf: **The V.I.P.'s**
London E.1 Dame Collett House: **Belt & Braces Band**
London Hackney All Nations Club: **Immigrant**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Rory Gallagher/Bram Tchaikovsky**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **Straight 8**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Rico**
London Kensington The Nashville: **Crazy Cavan 'n' The Rhythm Rockers**
London New Barnet Duke of Lancaster: **Canis Major**
London N.4 The Stapleton: **Rednite**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Dave Shepherd Quintet**
London Southall Hamborough Tavern: **The Bozos**
London Southgate Royalty Ballroom: **Froggy Roadshow**
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: **The Passions/Nipple Erectors**
Margate Sunshine Rooms: **The Accelerators**
Martletwy Cross Hands: **Girlschool**
Middlesbrough Rock Garden: **Adam & The Ants**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Outward Band**
Nottingham Sandpiper: **Rough Mix**
Oxford Corn Dolly: **Dog Watch**
Oxford Headington Labour Club: **Dave Berry & The Cruisers**
Rugeley Peartree Social Club: **Strange Days**
St. Albans Horn of Plenty: **Skin Deep**
Tonypandy Naval Club: **The Bombers**
Torquay 400 Ballroom: **Split Rivitt**
Walsall Pelsall Community Centre: **Gary & Vera Aspey**
Wishaw Crown Hotel (lunchtime): **The Pests**
York Revolution Club: **Jab-Jab**

Sunday

Arkholme Red Well: **Anniversary**
Birmimgham Railway Hotel: **Prima Donna**
Bishops Stortford Old Maltings: **Tracks (lunchtime)/Society Rhythm Orchestra (evening)**
Blackpool Jenkinson's Bar: **The Bombers**
Brighton Alhambra: **The Piranhas**
Brighton The Adur: **Possum**
Bromley The Northover (lunchtime): **Bill Scott & Ian Ellis**
Chesterfield Aquarius Club: **Dave Berry & The Cruisers (for a week)**
Croydon Greyhound: **The Damned**
Dundee Caird Hall: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Richard Hell & The Voidoids/John Cooper Clarke**
Hull Humberside Theatre: **Void**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Red Eye**
Liverpool Empire Theatre: **UFO**
London Battersea Nags Head: **Jugular Vein**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Pressure Shocks**
London East Ham Ruskin Arms: **Dog Watch**
London Hammersmith Odeon: **Rory Gallagher/Bram Tchaikovsky**
London Paddington Western Counties: **Rednite**
London Peckham Montepelier (lunchtime): **Blue Moon**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Cooper-Layton Duo**
Maidstone Hazlitt Theatre: **National Youth Jazz Orchestra**
Matlock College: **The Drill**
Newquay Central Hotel: **The Winners**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Press**
Poynton Folk Centre: **Street Band/Tom Yates**
Stevenage The Swan: **John Grimaldi's Cheap Flights**
Uxbridge Brunel University: **World Service**
Wakefield Theatre Club: **Linda Lewis**
Walsall Dirty Duck (lunchtime): **The Amazing Dark Horse**

Monday

Birmingham Barrel Organ: **The Crack**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Orphan**
Brighton The Adur: **Possum**
Edinburgh Odeon: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Richard Hell & The Voidoids/John Cooper Clarke**
Harrow The Roxborough: **The Bozos**
Ilford Cauliflower Hotel: **Original East Side Stompers**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **The Donkeys**
Liverpool The Crown: **The Clerks**
London Camden Dingwalls: **Harem Scarem/Steve Linton Band**
London Canning Town Bridge House: **Warm Jets**
London Fulham Golden Lion: **Joe Brown & The Bruvvers**
London Marquee Club: **Rory Gallagher**
London Putney Half Moon: **Richard Digance/Tony O'Leary**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Penny Royal**
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: **Reema Reema**
Mansfield Civic Theatre: **Zaine Griff**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **The Party**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Gwaihir**
Preston Moonraker: **The Bombers**
Rayleigh Crocs Club: **Crazy Cavan 'n' The Rhythm Rockers**

Tuesday

Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Fashion**
Birmingham Fighting Cocks: **Brujo**
Birmingham Mercat Cross: **Cartoons**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Speed Limit**
Bishops Stortford Triad Leisure Centre: **Trans Am**
Brighton Richmond Hotel: **Staa Marx**
Carlisle Market Hall: **UFO**
Chester Smartyz: **Zaine Griff**
Edinburgh Odeon: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Richard Hell & The Voidoids/John Cooper Clarke**
Fleet Fox & Hounds: **Wayland Smithy**
Ipswich Gaumont Theatre: **Rory Gallagher/Bram Tchaikovsky**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **The Bombers**
London Camden Brecknock: **Canis Major**
London Covent Garden Rock Garden: **Split Rivitt**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **The Bozos**
London Marquee Club: **Straight 8**
London New Barnet Duke of Lancaster: **First Aid**
London Sheen The Derby Arms: **Freddy's Feetwarmers**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Johnny Parker/Colin Smith Quartet**

Wednesday

London Stoke Newington Pegasus: **The Sneakers**
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: **Phil Ram Band**
London Woolwich Tramshed: **The Drill**
Sheffield Romeo & Juliet: **Gerry & The Pacemakers**
Walsall Dirty Duck: **The Amazing Dark Horse**
Wolverhampton Lord Raglan: **The Clerks**
Birmingham Barrel Organ: **Brujo**
Birmingham Railway Hotel: **Rainmaker**
Birmingham (Yardley) Bulls Head: **Roses**
Brighton Alhambra: **The Tinsels**
Brighton Dome: **Rory Gallagher/Bram Tchaikovsky**
Cheltenham Plough Inn: **Roadsters**
Chester Arts Centre: **Lol Coxhill/Kenny Shaw Band**
Leeds Viva Wine Bar: **Just Frank**
London Camden Dublin Castle: **Out To Lunch**
London Chadwell Heath Greyhound: **Dog Watch**
London Harrow Rd. Windsor Castle: **The V.I.P.'s**
London Islington Hope & Anchor: **Sassafras**
London Peckham Montpelier: **Blue Moon**
London Putney Star & Garter: **Dana Simmonds & Greig's Folk and Blues Showcase**
London Shepherds Bush Trafalgar: **Gino & The Sharks**
London Soho Pizza Express: **Bill Le Sage Quartet**
London West Hampstead Railway Hotel: **Local Operator**
London Wimbledon F.C. Nelson's Club: **Jab-Jab**
Nottingham Hearty Good Fellow: **Gwaihir**
Nottingham Imperial Hotel: **Pressure Shocks**
Portsmouth Polytechnic: **Streetband**
Preston Guildhall: **Elvis Costello & The Attractions/Richard Hell & The Voidoids/John Cooper Clarke**
Sheffield Romeo & Juliet: **Gerry & The Pacemakers**
Solihull Golden Lion: **Orphan**
South Woodford Railway Bell: **Original East Side Stompers**
Staindrop Black Swan: **Saffron Summerfield**
Swansea Technical College: **The Drill**

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OXFORD
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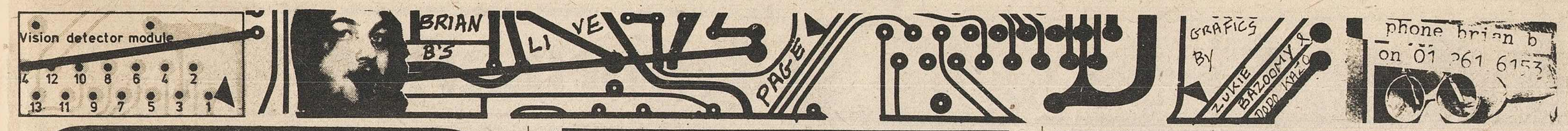

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Plus friends and Ian Fleming

Sat 13th Jan (Adm £1.00)
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Sun 14th Jan (Adm 85p)
YOUNG BUCKS
Plus guests and Mandy H

Mon 15th January
see panel below

Tue 16th Jan (Adm 85p)
STRAIGHT 8
Plus support and Joe Lung

Wed 17th Jan (Adm £1.00)
ERIC BELL BAND
Plus support and Joe Lung

Thur 18th Jan (Adm £1.00)
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Plus guests and Jerry Floyd

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Marquee Special Concert
RORY GALLAGHER
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Thursday January 11th 75p
STREETBAND
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Saturday January 13th £1.00
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Sunday January 14th £1.00
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Monday January 15th 75p
BLAZER BLAZER
Tuesday January 16th £1.00
SASSAFRAS
Thursday January 18th 75p
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Thursday 11th
Bridge House, Canning Town
Saturday 13th
The 400 Ballroom, Torquay
Tuesday 16th
Rock Garden
Friday 19th
Dingwalls
Tuesday 23rd
Rock Garden
Saturday 27th
The John Bull, Chiswick

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Tues Jan 16th
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(Rock Reggae outfit)

Students free Monday. Discount Tuesday and Wednesday. Open 9pm - 2am.

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RORY GALLAGHER
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Tickets from box office and usual agents.

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Thursday January 11th 30p
SPLIT RIVITT
Friday Janaury 12th 40p
JOHN POTTER'S CLAY
(Ex Wilko Johnson's Solid Senders)
Saturday January 13th 40p
GRIFFETTZ
Sunday January 14th 40p
REMUS DOWN BOULEVARD
Monday January 15th 30p
WARM JETS
Tuesday January 16th
DOG WATCH
Wednesday January 17th
NO SWEAT
Thursday January 18th 30p
SPLIT RIVITT

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BUZZ RADIO STATIONS
ALL OVER COUNTRY
Are These UFOs A Sign Of Things To Come? *

STAA MARX

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Thurs Jan 11
EPSOM: SCHOOL OF ART
Fri Jan 12
HATFIELD: POLYTECHNIC
Tues Jan 16
BRIGHTON: THE RICHMOND

BBC astronomer Patrick Moore states: "Of course there **IS** no life on Mars — there never has been and there never will be and quite frankly anybody believing this kind of shaggy dogs-worth is an idiot and needs locking up. Good night."
** i.e. like a debut s-gle out in Feb? (Gaspo).*

THE ELECTRIC BALLROOM
184 Camden High Street.

Saturday January 13th
THE BISHOPS
+ Support

Doors open 7.30pm
Admission £1.50

SCANDAL
SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED AT
The Spurs, The Roundway, N.17 Saturday January 13th
The Muskin, Wales Thursday January 18th
A Scandal a day helps you work, rest & play
Band enquiries: 01-804 2768

LANDSCAPE

Leeds, Fforde Green Hotel 19
Sheffield, Limit Club 20
London, Music Machine 24
Jan.

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MONDAY FEBRUARY 5TH 7.30 PM TICKETS £3.50 £3.00 £2.50 £2.00
Available from advance theatre b.o. 748 4081 London Theatre Bookings, Shaftesbury Ave. 439 3371 Premier Box Office, 240 2245 and usual agents

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Thursday January 11th
PURSEY'S PACKAGE
Angelic Upstarts
Invaders

Friday January 12th
WRITZ

Saturday January 13th
RAMROD

Sunday January 14th
QUARTZ

Tuesday January 16th
THE SQUAD

Thursday January 18th
ZAINE GRIFF

Friday January 19th
PUNISHMENT OF LUXURY

Saturday January 20th
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THE Venue
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Sat Jan 13th £3
CHARLIE AINLEY
One show 9pm

Wed Jan 24th £3
EDDIE MONEY
One Show 9pm

Wed Jan 31st £3
IAN MATHEWS
Two Shows 8.30pm & 12 midnight

Thurs Feb 1st £3
WALTER EGAN
One show 9pm

Only British appearances
Fri Feb 2nd Sat Feb 3rd
ANGELO BRANDUARDI
One Show Each night 9pm

Sat Feb 10th £3
CITY BOY
Two shows 8.30pm & 12 midnight

Only British appearance by former members of the Byrds, McGuinn, Clark & Hillman. £4
Thurs Feb 15th, Fri Feb 16th, Sat Feb 17th
Two shows each night 8.30pm & 12 midnight
Doors open at 7pm & 11pm.

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Friday January 12th
Elm Tree, Ringwood
Saturday January 13th
Bedales School
Wednesday January 17th
The Old Mill, Holbury
Friday January 19th
Dorset Inst of High Ed
Monday Jauary 22nd
White Horse, Rogate, nr Petersfield.
Putting silly things at the bottom of adverts Arizonaville is becoming a knockout — therefore Lord Paygate will not mention Yorkies this week (He's at the dentists!)

DUKE OF LANCASTER
Approach Road, New Barnet
(beside BR New Barnet)

Thursday January 11th
ZILCH
Friday Janauary 12th
LAMMAGYRA
Saturday January 13th
CANIS MAJOR
Sunday January 14th
SPHERE
Tuesday January 16th
FIRST AID

VIPs
Every Saturday night . . . Wheatsheaf pub, Kings Road (Worldsend)
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New single out shortly on Rok Records (dist. The Label)
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Saturday January 13th
(with Neon Hearts)

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U.F.O.
with guests
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MARKET HALL CARLISLE
Tuesday 16th January
St. GEORGES HALL BRADFORD
Thursday 18th January
KING GEORGES HALL BLACKBURN
Thursday 25th January
VICTORIA HALL HANLEY
Friday 2nd February
CAIRD HALL DUNDEE
Saturday 10th February

HOPE & ANCHOR
UPPER STREET
ISLINGTON, N.1

Thursday January 11th £1.50
THE DAMNED
Friday January 12th £1.00
SOFT BOYS
Saturday Janaury 13th £1.00
RICO
Sunday January 14th 75p
AFTER THE FIRE
Monday January 15th 60p
THE STICKERS
Tuesday January 16th 60p
ANDY ARTHURS & THE R.A.C.
Wednesday January 17th £1.00
SASSAFRAS
Thursday January 18th £1.00
CHINA STREET

Words (Barry Clarke) words words words words words wordsw
CITY HALL ST. ALBANS
Saturday January 20th
Capital Radio's very own
LITTLE
NICKY HORNE
+ JOHN DeSADE REVERBERATION ROADSHOW
BAR Food
All tickets £1.50 from Box Office, 37 Chequer Street, St. Albans, tel. 64511 or on door. Cheques and P.O'S made payable to St. Albans District Council.
Feb. 2/3 THE KINKS + Stadium Dogs
Words, words words words words words words words words

KINGS COLLEGE ENTS PRESENT
A New Years Party with
DAVID KUBINEC'S EXCESS
+ Support & Disco
FRIDAY JANUARY 12th at 8 pm
Tickets £1.25
Macadam Building, Surrey Street, W.C.2
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Friday, January 12th 50p
MONOS
Saturday, January 13th 50p
BIG CHIEF
featuring Dick Heckstall-Smith
Sunday, January 14th Free
DAVID BLOSSE BAND
Monday, January 15th Free
BLITZ KREIG
Tuesday, January 16th Free
SNEAKERS
Wednesday, January 17th Free
CROOKS

THE MEMBERS
would like to apologise to all their fans for being unable to appear at the NORWICH BOOGIE HOUSE on January 1st due to adverse weather conditions.
WE'LL SEE YOU THERE ON JANUARY 29th
HAPPY NEW YEAR

Information CITY

EDITED BY FRED DELLAR

My Agony

I WAS under the impression that Bill Nelson's "Northern Dream" album, on Smile Records, was a limited edition pressing of some 200 to 300 copies, these discs being distributed between Nelson's friends and some shops in Wakefield. If this is so, could you tell me why, after five unsuccessful years of searching for a copy, I have been able to buy two in the past three months? Copies have been seen all over London — so has it been re-pressed? — **NEIL SMITH, Leicester.**

● **Ah, Neil lad, sit thee sen down and listen to a Yorkshire yarn as told by Betty Bromby, owner of the Record Bar, Wakefield:**

"When Bill Nelson was about 16 and still at the Tech he used to come into the shop to look for records. We became friendly, and later, after discovering how talented he was musically, I offered to foot the bill for

— It was Bebop or the shop, says retailer

'Northern Dream,' which was cut on a shoestring budget, being recorded only on a twin track recorder. We did 250 of these and I sent them out to some people who I thought could help Bill — one being John Peel. He phoned up one day to say that he'd been away and had returned to find a warped copy of 'Dream' left in his garage. Apparently the disc was so badly damaged that he was only able to play about one track, but he liked it so much he rang up and asked for a new copy of the album so that he could play it on his show. Though EMI didn't want to know about Bill at first, they signed him as soon as they heard other companies were after him following the reaction to the Peel playings.

"I acted as Bill's manager for a time — I still have a letter confirming a booking at £11.50 for a night — but then everything got so big and I just couldn't cope with Bebop and trying to run my shop. So I gave up the former and continued with the shop, eventually re-issuing 'Northern Dream' about two years after the original release. These later pressings differ from the earlier ones in that they contain all the credits on the outer cover but do not come replete with the eight page booklet that was enclosed with the limited edition. I recently saw Bill — he's just finished recording a new Harvest album with his band Red Noise, an outfit that features his brother Ian — and he told me that he'd just played 'Northern Dream' for the first time in ages. 'There's nothing I'm ashamed of on that album,' he said. Nice eh?"

Well, that's the story. All that remains for me to do is to add the info that "Northern Dream" can be obtained from The Record Bar, 21 Upper Kirkgate, Wakefield, at a price of £3.25 (plus 30p postage and packing) and that 500 copies are readily available and waiting for buyers.

IT'S ABOUT time you gave us the low-down on why Roy Harper's "Commercial Break" didn't break loose during '78. It was hinted at about a year ago — so what went wrong? What is Harper doing now? What are his plans? Is he touring soon? Any info would be appreciated. — **TEX BOOK, of no fixed trousers.**

● **Everyone's a bit vague on the subject of our unhappy hero — but one way or another it would seem that "Commercial Break" just didn't pan out. Apparently all concerned were dissatisfied with the completed album and Harper has now retired to his sheep farm in Hertfordshire to contemplate further action. Said one Harperspokesperson: "It's possible that some of the tracks recorded for 'Commercial Break' will be used on Roy's next album, though nothing's certain. No gigs are planned either, the last one he did being back in the autumn."**

Meanwhile, the guy who once did a Rainbow gig with such chums as David Bedford, Jimmy Page, Ronnie Lane, Dave Gilmour, John Paul Jones and Keith Moon continues to jam with Larry the Lamb.

PLEASE can you provide a full track listing for the "Bob Dylan At Budokan" album recently reviewed by Nick Kent. Also, where the hell can I get a copy, 'cos nobody's heard of it up here in no man's land! — **J. BURNS, Corby, Northants.**

● **The "Budokan" double, reviewed with such alacrity by our Nicholas, contains live-in-Tokyo versions of "Mr Tambourine Man", "Shelter From The Storm", "Love Minus Zero"/"No Limit", "Ballad Of A Thin Man". "Don't Think Twice It's All Right", "Maggie's Farm", "One More Cup Of Coffee", "Like A Rolling Stone", "I Shall Be Released", "Is Your Love In Vain?", "Going, Going, Gone", "Blowin' In The Wind", "Just Like A Woman", "Oh Sister", "Simple Twist Of Fate", "All Along The Watchtower", "I Want You", "All I Really Want To Do", "Knockin' On Heaven's Door", "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)", "Forever Young" and "The Times They Are A-Changin'". All the copies I've seen have been imported by Flyover Records, 18 Queen Caroline Street, Hammersmith Broadway, London W.6. You can try phoning on 01-748-1595 if you like, though since the Dylan album arrived, that number's been almost constantly engaged.**

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BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE.

ON THE TOWN

When the Slit hits the fan

(or vice versa)

Pic: ROB HALL

The Slits

Liverpool

Three members of Scritti Politti and myself travel this long way to Eric's Club to see The Slits with new, male drummer, Budgie. They're a group who have always provoked imagination, investigation, and inspiration.

We introduce ourselves to Ari, Tessa, and Viv, and set about a question and answer business. They are changing for the show, making up and slinking into mini skirts and are agreeable if suspicious of our intentions and intervention into certain t'ings, such as the lack of a record company and Slit recordings. Have they any record deals . . . any feelings on how to deal with the Rock Press?

No, not really. The pleasant Tessa and Viv, the petulant Ari.

St.Trinian's tantrums dubbed over an oblique hippy-ish malevolence) present a charming ambiguity, an effervescent evasivesness. Like their music, they sharply slide over attitudes, poses, bluffs, disinclination, anti-intellectualization.

Rock has traditionally denied women certain positions through an inbuilt, narcissistic, repressive apparatus which wields stereotype and asinine implication, but in performance The Slits suggest a new space; potential.

Like ex-drummer Palm Olive's satellite band The Raincoats, The Slits *do* create a new 'space', do utilize new rhythms and lines — it's aesthetically provocative music — neither Rock nor white reggae-Rock — with spaces left and significations thrown up which rock traditionally denies as valid, as reasonable.

But The Slits do seem to be operating un some dangerous kind of double bind . . . where allowing rock music to be manipulated shifts from one pole to another. The degree of control over the *meaning* of what they're doing and what they're coming up against (press, managers clubs, etc) is minimal. The onstage music maximizes minimalism; the offstage manner minimalizes the implications of the music.

Onstage the images, the spaces, the faces, the sexuality are provocative beyond any futile use of parody. But the lad in the audience who tells Ari to "get 'em off" is intimidated by these three girls going on the Rock Stage. But they abuse this stage in a general and specifically feminie way, and by expressing both female sexuality and that unusual Slit-wise sexuality. *That* comes dangerously close at times to a teasing, inverted approximation of the norm. Onstage The Slits should be determined by the enviroment, but that either didn't interest the shruggy, petulant Slits, or it was anexchange not allowed to this particular rock journalist.

The only 'space', it might be said, that The Slits do actually use is a purely aesthetic one (as opposed, crudely stated, to one where there is no aesthetic/political division) constituted by the audience's own standards, and those standards being prevailed upon in a certain context (in this case, Eric's). Dealing only with the aesthetic (surface) is merely providing impetus for an audience's expected response or a group's expected Set/Encore/Autographs.

This Eric's audience is an expression of a weak, tedious, complacent ineritia; the one which was supposedly cleared away by the new wave.

At Eric's The Slits are neither 'poppy' nor 'softer' than before — as has been claimed in the press. Budgie is at times too slick, but mostly slots perfectly into the framework. The Slits apparent negligence could be 'justified' as a measure to keep hold of their sponteneity.

Dependable and morally suspect (like the Eric's bouncers who mashed up I and I after the show) the contradictions and divisions exist, The Slits' opposition doesn't. Such wilful detatchment sets up the conditions for violence, profit, and apathy — as bad as The Clash 'Who care about their fans' continuing to play the Music Machine time after time.

According to the way of society and the world today, Slitlocks are one space forward, ten steps backward and a severe beating to boot. You would have the chance to defend yourself?

What was that about Babylon, Ari?

Ian Penman

Speedball Benefit

The Venue

This benefit was for Marc Zermati, boss of the French record label Skydog and organiser of the Mont de Marsan punk festival, who is in jail awaiting trial for alleged drugs offences.

Artists associated with Skydog or helped by Zermati early in their careers agreed to perform, and the gig posters read like a Who's Who of British Rock: Rockpile, assorted Feelgoods, The Tyla Gang and The Damned were all to appear.

But the first set was by **Ducks Delux,** reformed especially for the occasion.

Although the members now play important parts in The Motors, The Rumour and The Tyla Gang, The Ducks never gained the recognition they deserved until after their demise. They're undoubtedly one of Britain's premier rock bands, but their set was no better or worse than those they played in the early '70s.

Sean Tyla was even more vociferous and objectionable; Nick Garvey, sporting a full beard and collarless shirt, was less aggressive than the greasy rocker of yore, and his bass playing has improved a lot; and Martin Belmont maintained his accustomed role as a low-profile Goliath guitarist.

Steve Goulding from The Rumour replaced Tim Roper on drums, but it was still a spirited performance.

"Fireball", "Don't Mind Rockin' Tonite", "Nervous Breakdown", "Coast To Coast" were all great numbers. "Teenage Head" was too fast and lost the raw simplicity of the Groovies' original; while Belmont's guitar detuned itself unnerveringly during the encore of "Oh Carol".

Next were the much lauded **Rockpile.**

On record I've always regarded Dave Edmunds as an overrated rock'n'roller and Nick Lowe as a talented palgiarist, but their combined firepower onstage was undeniably withering.

"So It Goes", "I Knew The Bride" and "Deborah" opened the set it was music for dancing, and the response rapturous. Guitarist Billy Bremner contributed his own "Trouble Boys" while Colver's Hughie Lewis contributed harmonica on the encores.

A scintillating "Promised Land", and a new Lowe song "Born Fighter" ensured another encore, "Heart Of The City".

So far so fantastic, but time was running out. A last minute change from the Electric Ballroom to The Venue gave them an extra hour until 1am, but even so The Ducks hadn't gone on until 9.30. Better organisation and shorter sets would have paid off, as not everybody had time to play.

When **The Damned** supported The Troggs at the Roundhouse a year ago, I though they were one of the most exciting bands I'd ever seen. But a lot of stagnant water has passed under the bridge since then.

Rat Scabies sported a new hat; Captain Sensible smashed the life out of his guitar; the new bass player, Alistair Word (ex-Saints) had a nice line in dumb insolence; Dave Vanian greeted the crowd with a spitball of stage blood, and the punks moved in . . .

The sound, which until then had been excellent, was suddenly distorted so badly that I couldn't hear most of the titles let alone the words. But they started with "Jet Boy / Jet Girl" and rocketed their way through "Teenage Dream", "Lookin' For Trouble" and "Born To Kill". Then a fat skinhead jumped on stage for the first of many impressive manoeuvres, including diving off into the densely packed area in front. Some fun, huh?

Vanian belatedly tried to stop the fights that broke out, but with littel conviction. Afterall, ruin an atmosphere you've helped create in the first place?

Had they got their music together The Damned could have been contenders. Now they're just another punk band.

"New Rose" stood the test of time, and they encored reasonably well with "Pretty Vacant" and "I Feel Alright". Captain Sensible, reminding me of a demented Michael Palin, rounded the evening off with *his* version of "Summer Nights".

It was a shame there was no time for the Tylas or Feelgoods as they might have brightened up the shabby end to the show.

Neil Norman

Joe Jackson

Hope and Anchor

There's talent, and there's talent. Joe Jackson has both.

His single "Is She Really Going Out With Him" is playing on tape. Survivors or the weather conditions are singing along in a state of partial thaw. A Scotsman informs me that "JJ's dead brilliant." I mention his name to the bar staff, and they lapse into starry-eyed ecstasy. Is it a conspiracy?

The band arrive to a heartwarming reception. Drummer Dave Houghton wears black, guitarist Gary Sanford wears white, bassman Graham Mayby wears both, and the man himself favours a hoodlum pin-stripe with a gross-out polkadot tie. He looks like he hasn't slept for a month; he acts like he doesn't need to.

First impressions of the set suggest an excellence in every respect; from then on it only improves. A near-perfect sound balance points out the most thoughtful, controlled springboard backing, the band's range widened by their deliberately economic style.

Over this, Joe's precision lyrics paint a very clear picture; an unusually sharp mix of observation and sentiment given an added lift by his confidential cabaret-type delivery.

Pacing throughout is supreme. "Pretty Girls", "Look Sharp" and "Baby Stick Around" are all firmly grounded in slick, dance band rock. There's the same clipped, tense appeal as Costello, but with an immediate warmth and colour.

Shuffled into a mostly fast moving set are a couple of reggae-based numbers. The first, "Sunday Papers" makes the same stab at the tabloids as The Jam's "News Of The World". More acute, and less a statement of the obvious, it comes with a killer chorus line and a dedication to the overhyped news feature of the week: Todd Rundgren's codpiece.

The second is "Fools In Love", a shamelessly catchy and lilting song that's almost a ballad. So much so, that if it were to fall into alien hands it would probably resurface with palmcourt orchestration. As it stand it's unique, both for a lyric that strangely alternates sleaze and aggression, and the uncannily thin dub rhythm that traces out the vocal line.

Also on offer is a genuinely affectionate version of Fats Waller's "Ain't Misbehavin' ". Busking most of the lyrics, Joe plays it as a keyboard solo, which shows an evident technical skill that will allow him endless possibilities with the band.

Joined for three encores by Ian Gomm, they play Domino and Chuck Berry covers "Ain't That A Shame" and "Come On". Not a gratuitous, fail-safe exit route, but two fine re-vamped versions that finally spotlight Sanford's solos.

'79 will see an ascent of the charts by Joe Jackson.

You'll believe a man can fly.

Mark Ellen

The Queen stripped bare

Queen

Los Angeles

The explosions and smoke have disappeared, the lighting is redefined and the costume changes are a thing of the past. Yet Queen remain a devastating concert attraction.

Now they seem intent on stressing their strongest musical moments, even to the extent of sacrificing a lot of their newest tunes from "News Of The World" and "Jazz". They still show traces of pomp and grandiosity, but Queen have attempted to shed all excesses and allow the music to stand on its own.

But the inherent problem in their presentation is predictability. Anyone who has seen them before knows what the set will be even before they're seated.

Like last year's Forum show, this concert opens with the chant-a-long, "We Will Rock You"; a curious blend of acappella and hard rock that's become part of Queen's anthem — "We Are The Champions" of course being the other half.

They quickly follow with brisk versions of "Let Me Entertain You", "If You Can't Beat 'Em, Join 'Em" and "Somebody To Love". During these songs vocalist Freddie Mercury works both ends of the stage urging audience involvement. Clad in a punk-ish, shiny biker's outfit replete with shades and cap, he's obviously challenging new wave outfits at their own game.

While followers of Modern Music insist they have no time for the highly produced, glossy and formulated quality of Queen's records, they'd find it hard to convince any of the three capacity audiences at the Forum that the group aren't one of rock's premier forces.

Medlies have now become a crucial vehicle to enable the band to sandwich in slices of their albums within a streamlined framework. "Death On Two Legs", "Killer Queen", "Bicycle Race", "I'm In Love With My Car", "You're My Best Friend" and the embarrassing "Get Down Make Love" were all played.

And with four songwriters in the band, each can select his best material and so avoid presenting second-raters.

Guitarist Brian May and John Deacon and Roger Taylor on bass and drums, fill out the musical backing with power and authority. And May's solos demonstrate his incredible finesse and restraint.

The acoustic segment of the show, played on a platform, is a welcome relief from the raging intensity of the rockers. "39", illustrating their folk roots, is a great touch; as are the varied elements of pop, jazz, music-hall and opera that continue to pop up in their repertoire.

Predictably, the show ends with the band tearing through "Sheer Heart Attack", "Keep Yourself Alive", "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Tie Your Mother Down" and a reprise of "We Are The Champions/We Will Rock You".

But for the next tour Queen will have to decide how to invigorate their attack. Doubtless they'll do exactly what they want, confident the fans will accept what they're offered.

It's an arrogant attitude, but Queen seem to think they have nothing left to prove.

Justin Pierce

A Simple Mind. Pic: LAURIE EVANS.

Simple Minds

Dundee

The many people who have stumbled across Simple Minds in Scotland know how wonderful they are.

We've known for months that they are more approachable, more mature and much more fully realised than any other This Year's Thing. But here is the dilemma: in these times of global villages, high-powered advertising and so on, language has been devalued to the point where bands described in anything but the most extreme terms are given only scant attention — which can only work against a group as unique and special as Simple Minds.

So be warned: don't blame Simple Minds for the inevitable over-enthusiasm of the media.

Now the over-excited ravings.

Not everyone will appreciate the many subtleties of the band. Their sinister, eerily atmospheric music and inscrutible appearance will doubtless be misinterpreted as cold detachment by some. But whether you bought this paper in Euston Menzies or San Francisco City Lights, you'll be reading a lot more about them within a few months.

Since Ian Cranna's review (*NME* 14.10.78), they have gained confidence, lost a rhythm guitarist, improved western culture with some new songs, signed with Zoom/Arista and should be recording an album shortly with XTC's producer John Leckie, who has travelled here to see them tonight.

Only a few people have arrived in time to stand in awed reverence before a cramped, 18 inch high stage where, even from only feet away, the whole band display impressive, impassive charisma and confidence.

Jim Kerr's voice was once described by a Glasgow fanzine, as "a controlled scream". But he's learned fast and now sings with only a soft edge of craziness, and there's something inexplicably French about a voice that's full of fascinating twists.

Only the eyes show anything, a sly, glazed mania. Occasionally a hint of a smile evokes creepy, ancient vampire nobility and arrogance.

Every detail is subtle and tasteful with this band; qualities virtually alien to rock. I hope enough people can still appreciate something as quietly insidious as this after so much crass exhibitionism.

As Johnny and The Self Abusers they were good enough to have done well. Perhaps we should be grateful to a system which failed to find them until they had grown into something much more than that.

Here are the names which will soon be familiar: Jim Kerr (vocals); Charlie Burchill (guitar/violin); Michael McNeil (keyboards); Derek Forbes (bass); Brian McGee (drums).

Which songs to watch for? All of them.

Glenn Gibson

Rudi

Belfast

Rudi, the best band to emerge in Belfast over the last two years, recently returned to play to the Harp's biggest audience ever.

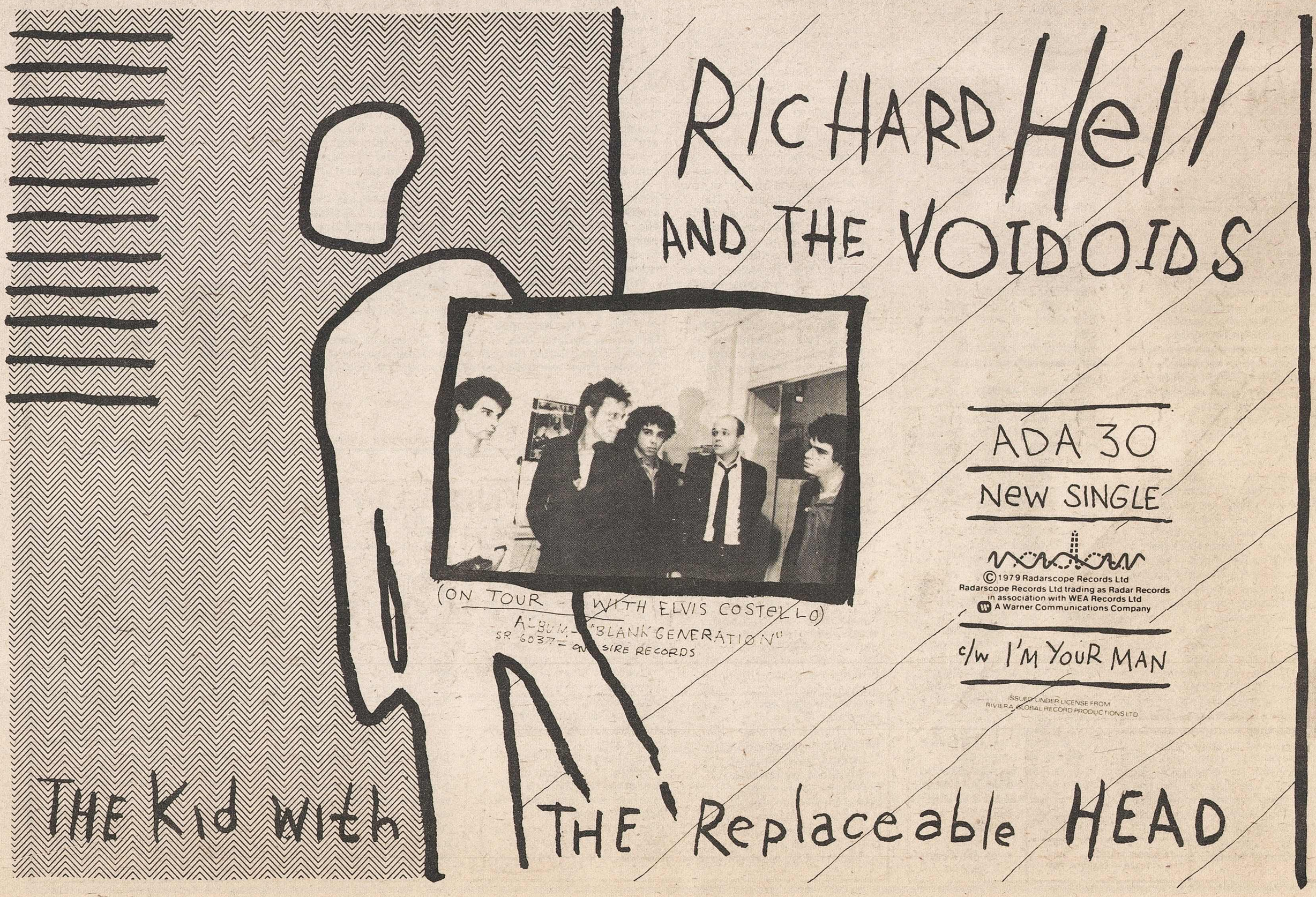
Supported by The Idiots, who sound too much like Sham 69, and bleak Bowie imitators Raped, Rudi produced a set split equally between new and old songs. Readily acknowledging the plagiarism within their material and the sometimes weak structures, it was the surging excitement of their act which was so impressive.

"Excitement" had Gen X chunky-chord riffing combined with great vocals and lyrics; "Alcohol" was their *raison d'etre* preaching emancipation through inebriation; while "Time To Be Proud" showed they have enough imagination not to become stale.

But there were niggling weaknesses which prevent Rudi being a *great* rock 'n'roll outfit: the set lacked the binding cohesion which would provide it with that killer punch; and they also have a disparaging image.

Even so, I'll never know why Rudi do the rounds of London's pub-dives while the likes of Japan frequent the Music Machine.

Gavin Martin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■ Continued from page 8

the beginning of '78, when their material had strengthened, their naivity had not been dispelled. Just prior to employing the sensible organisational ability of ex-Rafters D.J. Rob Gretton, who gently smoothed over the groups blunders and gave them an actual direction, they signed a particularly dubious contract with an eccentric major record company subsidiary to record an album, an adventure that has only just concluded.

The collection of songs they prepared for that project are structurally sound if direly produced, but may yet surface remixed by Martin Zero.

Zero, Rabid's house producer, has taken an avid interest in the group's progress, and persuaded Rabid boss Tosh Ryan to distribute their discarded "Ideal For Living" EP (Later issued on the Anonymous label as a 12 inch with a far superior sleeve than the Enigma seven inch.)

Zero also produced the group's insinuating, atmospheric contributions to the Factory double EP sampler, "Digital" and "Glass". Thanks to Gretton, Zero and Factory, Joy Division enter '79 in an unpredictably strong position. They're surviving. They're growing up.

"Sometimes we felt like finishing, but it was because everyone ignored us or interferred that we kept thinking we'll show them. Now we've reached a point where we all work (at day jobs) and we need to give up work to continue ... but it's not worth signing to a record company unless they can supply you with a living.

"We'd like to stay on the outside. We'd love it if Tony Wilson said he'd pay us to do an album on Factory. That would be great. We can't afford to do it ourselves, which we'd want. But you either stay outside the system or go in totally and try and change it."

AS DICK Witts implies, the new wave is experimental music, possessing all the advantages of rock and potentially containing all the pitfalls of a concealed, incestuous music. It is alert and active. When Witts helped set up the Manchester Music Collective 18 months ago, (collectives are usually the homes of obscure experiemental musicians) The Fall and other rock musicians attended the first meeting, conscious of the need to work without relying on the industry.

This is rock concerned with alternatives, rock scorning rigid routines.

The Collective developed well during 1978 although Witts feels perhaps it's already stagnated a little setting up a circuit for a number of interesting new rock groups who could play, borrow equipment, experiment. Manchester Mekon, Spherical Objects, The Passage, A Certain Ratio, Grow Up, The Elite etc. Joy Division etc.

Curtis: "The Collective was a really good thing for Joy Division. It gave us somewhere to play, we met other musicians, talked, swapped ideas. Also it gave us a chance to experiment in front of people. We were allowed to take risks — the Collective isn't about music that needs to draw an audience."

"Groups in the Collective were basically exposing the fact that society has been constructed in a certain stinking way and can be reconstructed. Groups performing for a reason ..." Witts develops.

"In rock you have to use practical images, what goes on in rock music is fantastic, far more complex than anything that goes on in experimental music. Because it's an absolutely natural social thing."

This new underground of musicians, and we're talking about a whole list of names (Scritti Politti, Prag VEC, ATV, Passage, Cabaret Voltaire, Gang of Four, Fall, Sect, etc etc etc) have many motivations; ostensibly to entertain themselves, criticise society, fight the industry, suggest, contrast, defy, deny, retain and elaborate on rocks myths, recognise that rock demands are continually changing, to supply provocative entertainment, to continue offering choice.

The need is for something positive. You can only con yourself for so long. Do you want to pretend that you're comfortable or accept you're confused. Or don't you want to think at all. The Passage, Spherical Objects and Joy Division are there if you want them...

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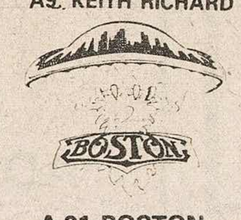
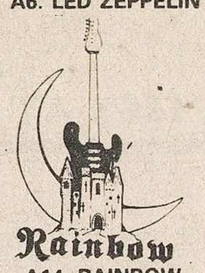


A.31 BOSTON

A7. THIN LIZZY



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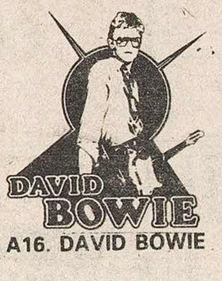
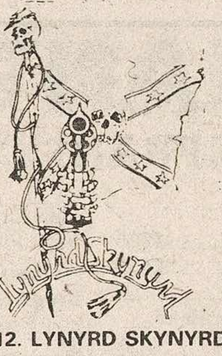


A16. DAVID BOWIE

A33



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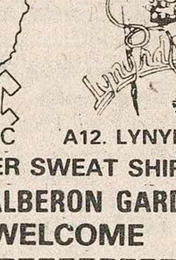
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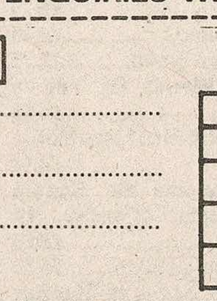

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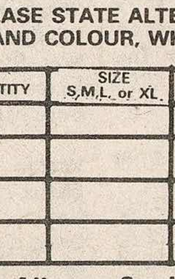
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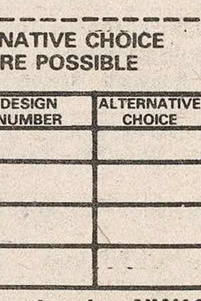
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SORE THROAT. Pic: ROB HALL

Sore Ears

Sore Throat

Nashville

Contrary to rumours that have reached my ears, Sore Throat are not destined to be saviours of The Universe.

Nor are they creative, ingenious, bizarre, dynamic or even remotely entertaining. At best, they're laughable, at worst, despicable. People of discernment should give them a very wide berth.

It's even less credit to the band that the air of booze-addled festivity that surrounded this seasonal gig presumably showcased them at their most accessible. But even on a stage invaded by cavorting punters and drunken roadies, they still couldn't cut it as a live act.

Their music is also far from infectious. They come on all peroxide crops and scarlet jackets, looking like a bunch of sleazy-but-tough Butlin's Redcoats, and then have the nerve to play a set that's mostly lifted from late '50s rock 'n' roll.

The six-piece line-up has a brassy self-assured sound that reeks of rehearsal, verges on automation, and too often leans on the sax for any real definition. Matt Flowers supplies angular keyboards, while frontman Justin Ward sings badly with marked disinterest and occasionally plays adequate harp.

If it wasn't for a (very Westernized) minor flirtation with reggae, they'd do better to admit being exclusively a revival band, and go all out for a visual front that didn't detract from their music. At the same time, their original material merely apes the Presley era — a futile exercise. I mean, who's going to buy a Sore Throat single when for the same money they can get the *real thing?*

To end this gig some skinhead leaping around the stage dropped his strides. Ward dropped his in sympathy, and Flowers was sprawled on the deck with a roadie trying to drag him off, as the rest of them played a hapless tune called "I Don't Wanna Go Home".

The Northern Club Circuit would have gone berserk.

Mark Ellen

The Tunes

Manchester

'The Tunes' sounds like a power-pop concept.

Unlike most of the unknown bands currently on offer in Manchester, it's rumoured they've recently made some promising demos, and the word is that the big boys from the Smoke are about to hone in waving greenbacks.

The Tunes are a four-piece. Their singer has a receding hairline and they score higher still in the local fashion stakes by having a female (and feminine) keyboard player too.

Against a solid, muscular rhythm section (George Budd and Bernard Nuttall, bass and drums) guitarist/singer Colin Thorpe plays in a dislocated quirky style, possibly because he has just shifted from keyboards. Newcomer Ann Webley delightfully fills out a sparse framework with hurdy-gurdy colouring.

Their lyrics are off-beat, a mixture of local realism and doomladen fantasy; but a few songs — "Three Car Cortege", "Larger Than Life" and "Headlights" — are fully realised and atmospheric.

Overall, The Tunes come halfway between XTC and The Cars, but lack the verve of either. They have failings (little stage presence, a stiff, leaden approach to their material), but there's little that better technology and experience can't resolve.

A band with a future, I think.

Ian Wood

Gentlemen prefer to be blondes

Wayne County

Dingwalls

Any innocent who chanced upon Dingwalls this particular midnight might be forgiven some confusion.

There, in a yecch-green dress under a yecch-blue light, the new Wayne County is going through the motions. With her deep-throat voice, blonder-than-blonde long hair and those Dusty Springfield eyes, the earthy figure she cuts nowadays could be taken straight from Music-Night in a Birkenhead pub rather than the likes of Noo Yawk sleaze emporium, Max's Kansas City.

Add to this the torrent of unwholesome hilarity in her act and the resulting mixture is disorientating to say the least. The image may well have undergone some modification ("Y'see? I'm not tacky any more!"), not to mention extensive surgery, but still the girl is no Vera Lynn.

I've a guarded sort of respect for County, finding her now definitive anthem "Man Enough To Be A Woman" a powerful personal statement, and considering her well-published sexual readjustment a braver display of commitment than might be expected from other exponents of Protest Into Style.

But rather than in the songs, it's in Ms County's own personality that this appeal has its strength. Indeed the music is often only mediocre. The Electric Chairs, stolid like straightment in a comedy act, are no dopes instrumentally but the sound rarely transcends the New York early-70s genre.

And Wayne's singing doesn't help matters either.

In fact it gets pretty tiresome, especially during "Max's Kansas City": an extended Manhattan name-drop (boasting an inbuilt spot-the-riff contest) wherein her breathless macho-soul parody appears on the verge of taking itself seriously or, perhaps more likely, forgetting what the joke was.

A few numbers, notably "It Ain't What You Got, It's What You Learn To Do With What You Got", "Mr Normal" and "Bad In Bed", do raise the tone. But several strike me as great titles in search of a decent song to justify their existence, including The Electric Prunes' "I Had Too Much To Dream Last Night".

But all the old classics remain, reasonably intact and as relentlessly unpleasant as ever.

The trouble is that Wayne County and the Electric Chairs represent another mis-match of that famous old double-act, Form and Content.

Without a more effective vehicle than shows like this, all the humour and dangerous vision which makes Wayne County special will never surpass their present, limited circle of acceptance.

Clearly, she's a person who needs an audience. I wonder how many she'll convince that the need is mutual.

Paul Du Noyer

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POETRY WANTED over £1,700 in prizes annually. Subscription £10. For free criticism send to Regency Press, 43 New Oxford St., WC1A 1BH. Dept A3.

ROCK JOURNALISTS and Photography. Booklet by ex-staffman explains how magazines work, job possibilities, how to get freelance contributions accepted etc. 65p plus 10p post / Package to: Intro Books, P.O. Box 3, Scotton, near Catterick Garrison, N. Yorks DL9 3NT.

TWO LONELY SAILORS seek young ladies for correspondence, leading to friendship. Photos appreciated. Box No. 3696.

UFO'S MEETINGS, skywatches, news, information, photos etc. Details, s.a.e. British UFO Society, 47 Belsize Square, London, N.W.3.

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AMERICAN ROCK MAGAZINE — SAE/IRC for illustrated list and order form — **GRAFFITI U.K.**, Wagon Yard, London Road, Marlborough, Wiltshire.

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GUITAR PLAYER MAGAZINE — October '78, Jerry Garcia; John Tropea; Liona Boyd; Al Caiola; Jazz Guitar Duos; November '78: Roy Clarke; Eddie Van Halen; Egberto; Gismonti; Emmylou Harris. December '78: Bill Wyman; Dixie Dregs; Shawn Phillips; Doug Jernigan; £1.05 each incl. p&p **GRAFFITI,** Wagon Yard, London Road, Marlborough, Wiltshire.

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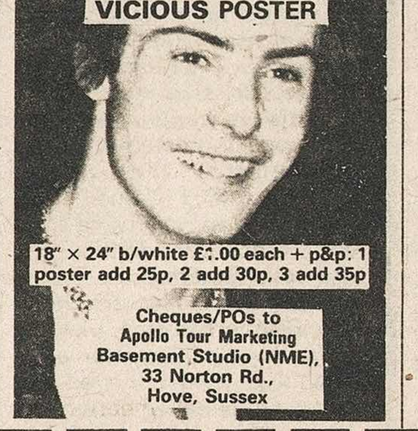

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MIGHT AS well read what's in 'Records for Sale' — the rest of the paper was pretty boring — the Stiff ad — that's always good for a laugh — The much awaited Devo 12" in black vinyl, 6 tracks — £1.99. Special offer, buy recent Stiff LP, get deleted one free! Deletions include Seez 5, 6, Fist 1 — Get 2 albums, £3.99. State 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice for free LP. Also applies to singles, buy 2, get one free, deleted singles inc. Buy 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25. Lot 1. Off 2, Off 4, last 4. Albums 1-12 (8-12) coloured — £3.99, Pic discs, £4.75. Get 1, 2, 3 — £2.75 — Heroes & Cowards, £2.75, Sex & Drugs 12", £1.75 — singles — buy 1-10 in box — £12.50. Buy, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 36, 39, 40, 41. Lot 1, Dev 1, Boy 1, 2, Offl. 2 — 75p — EP's 1, 2, 4 — 99p — T-shirts, S.M.L. — if it aint stiff it ain't worth a f . . k Tour Shield, Tour signatures (cols) £2.00. Badges, F . . k 20p, Stiff S.S. Eric, Rachel, Jupp, Jona, Lene — 15p, Enamel tour — £1.00. Damned Song Book — 50p, Tour progs. 40p. Patches, 50p — Posters — Dury, 35p, Tour, 50p. H. Ocean + 1st Stiff, 15p — send for catalogue. For all awaiting Stiff Tour 12" sorry about delay, will get away a.s.a.p. Inc. P&P on all orders, Small 25p, large 50p. Write to: Stiff S.S., 32 Alexander Street, London, W.2. Tel: 01 229 9092.

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Julie With a 'C' . . .

Julie Covington
Riverside Studios

If rock music is supposed to be about energy then look no further than Liza Minnelli. And if it involves glamour and sexual caricature, than who does it better than Bette Midler?

But who do we turn to for warmth, intimacy, humour and tradition? . .

After two weeks of abject misery and self-pity, mostly concerning the idols and ideals of the rock leisure industry, I was lifted into tingling optimism by one night's unpretentious, passionate, crisp music. *O bella Julie!*

Not wishing to be a victim of the prevailing witch-hunt, I won't begin by commenting on how lovely Julie looked (white shirt offset by a red rose, baggy black trousers if you're interested), and will move on to more serious phenomena.

Julie reminds me of Robert De Niro: someone who seems to object to 'stardom' and all it entails, but at the same time has always seemed destined for it. Well, I like them both as well.

The evening hopped between Julie with The Albion Band; The Albion Band; Julie with The Albion Band and Richard and Linda Thompson; Richard and Linda; Julie with Linda and folk singer Melanie Harold.

When Julie sang lead the material was from her recent album; and with her as backup singer, it was traditional Albion Band; and unexpectedly very pleasing.

Particular delights were Julie's versions of Sandy Denny's "By The Time It Gets Dark", another song from her LP "Let Me Make Something In Your Life", and the Julie, Linda, Melanie acappella rendering of The Everly Brothers' "So Sad". Julie closed with the comforting, metaphysical "I Can't Dance", and encored with Richard Thompson's "Bright Lights". Lovely.

I can't remember the last time I left a gig feeling quite so happy.

Ian Penman

Durutti Column
Margox
Manicured Noise
Surprise Guests
Manchester

This party with "Surprise Guests" threatened to collapse right from the start.

The first band announced by resident compere Bernard (a.k.a. Gordon the Moron) fail to play when the audience can't furnish a competent drummer. The chance of Buzzcocks' appearing also becomes unlikely, even though Pete Shelley arrived earlier.

Durutti Column, now down to a two-piece, make a sordid attempt to liven up the show. The singer bellows grossly amidst the meticulously flash guitar trickery of one time Nosebleed ("Aint Bin To No Music School") Vinnie Riley, and the beat is aided and abetted by the singer occasionaly hitting the tom toms.

But this duo can be rejected as yet another drab bunch of pretentious poseurs trying to inflict the audience with an inferiority complex.

Margox is a slim unattractive figure (admired by many for her rendition of "White Christmas") who tonight sings two numbers to the accompaniment of Kraftwerk discs. It could have been passed off as a punter's idea of a joke, had it not completely failed to amuse.

The first *real* act of the night are Manicured Noise, a five-piece.

Now featuring saxist and one time Sid Vicious stablemate Steve Walsh — a former contributor to these pages — looking strikingly plain on guitar, their contribution to the new music scene grows and develops throughout their set. Their selfish experimentation even becomes entertaining in comparison to my last encounter with the band of the same name in December '77. I await December 1980 with open ears; meanwhile in '79 I ask "Is it rock 'n' roll?"

At 12.30 the "surprise guests" materialise. They comprise Buzzcocks' Pete Shelley and Steve Garvey, and Fall drummer Karl Burns.

The opening number "Breakdown" is played at half speed with Burns (probably twice the drummer John Maher is) struggling to maintain the beat; but once rectified his playing overshadows the rest of the band.

The beginning of the end comes when a youngster whom Shelley introduces as Simon, accepts an offer to sing "What Do I Get". He subsequently tries to hog the whole show, alongside all the punters who cram themselves onto the stage. And Shelley has to plead to be allowed the vocals on "I Don't Mind".

"Fast Cars" filters through with reasonable success before the set finally disintegrates into total chaos.

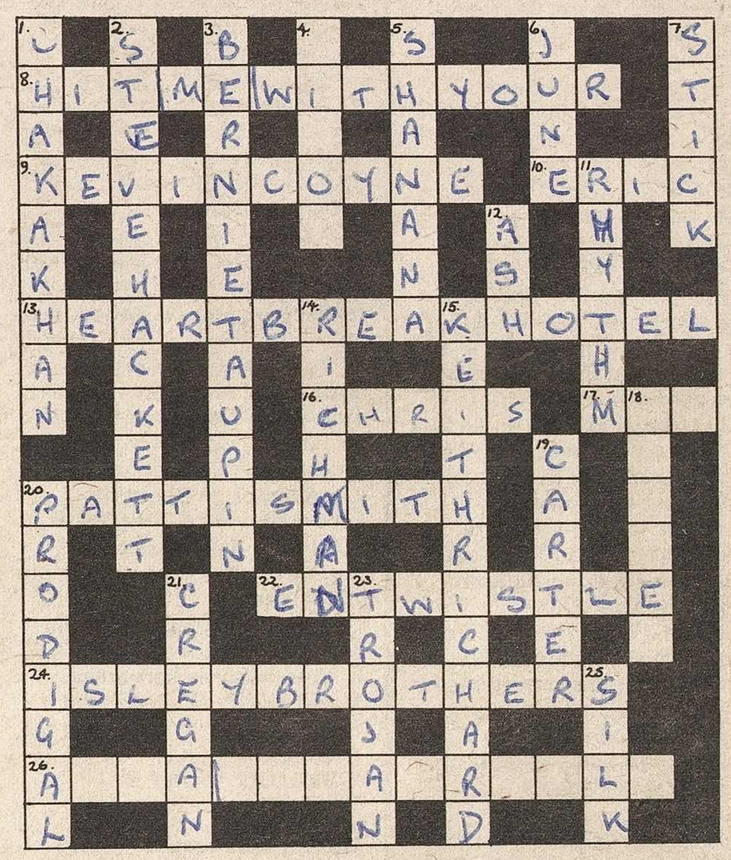
"White Riot" begins hopefully, Shelley easily imitating those infamous Clash chords, while Garvey struts arrogantly. But the shambles that follows with every face in town adding their voices to the band's armoury is depressing.

An announcement that the Greater Manchester police are waiting outside clears the hall.

Martin Ryan

ACROSS
8 & 11 & 7 Music for masochists? (3,2,4,4,6,5)
9 Virgin label artiste — or is it a specially-minted penny commemorating Europe's Footballer Of The Year!? (5,5)
10 Guitarist among the idle rich!
13 Elvis Presley's first Transatlantic smash — it's what comes of leaving travel arrangements to Tardy Tours Inc. (10,5)
16 Debbie's beau
17 Kansas City geezer!
20 Stamp it hit (anag. two words)
22 A bassist is outstanding in a course of ten twist lessons!!
24 Relatively and individually speaking they're Ronald, Rudolph, Kelly, Ernie and Marv (5,8)
26 One of two French-Canadian folk-singer sisters who've cut two albums for the Brothers Warner (4;10)

DOWN
1 You may have heard of her brother Ghengis — he had a big hit with "I'm Every Man"! (5,4)
2 Genesis old boy, followed Gabriel Minor into a solo career (5,7)
3 EJ's former wordsmith, currently hanging out with A. Cooper (6,6)
4 Wherever Paul's other half is, I'm one to find it!
5 U.S. rock'n'roll parodists — or what the people of Iran have been saying to their beloved leader!! (3,2,2)
6 & 19 Mrs Johnny Cash, herself a singer and member of a famous musical family
7 See 8
11 See 8
12 Burnt portion of Andy Powell's band
14 Moneyed Beserkley artiste?
15 Hid, I track her (anag. two words)
18 Asylum songwriter separated from his wealth!
19 See 6
20 Repentant wanderer such as figured in Steel Pulse 45
21 Guitarist Jim, ex of Family and C.Rebel, currently accompanying R.Stewart
23 In the early days of reggae's introduction to UK this was one of the leading labels
25 "---- Degrees" was a Boz Scaggs album



ACROSS: 1 "Fat Bottomed Girls"; 5 (Tim) Rice; 6 (Robert) Johnson; 9 Inez (Foxx); 12 (Peter) Skellern; 13 Diana (Ross); 14 Ronnie Scott; 15 Mojo; 16 Long John Baldry; 19 "Aquarius"; 21 (Paul) Anka; 22 Nick (Mason); 23 Grammy; 24 Ray (Davies); 27 Osmonds; 28 & 29 "Jarrow Song"; 31 Platters. **DOWN**: 1 "For Your Pleasure"; 2 "Breaking Glass"; 3 Dion; 4 RCA; 6 Julie Covington; 7 (Frank) Sinatra; Ned (Kelly); 10 Zimmerman; 11 (Nick) Mason; 17 Lenny (Bruce); 18 Jacksons; 20 "Stand Up"; 25 Yoko; 26 Free.

Even if Parsons and Burchill see their role as journalists as writing articles designed to fill *Gasbag* with outraged letters the following week, do they have to take such a rigid "We're right and everyone over 21's wrong" attitude? They're no more justified in calling their big brother's music trash than he is in criticizing what they like (if they still like any music after all their hatchet-jobs).

They grew up with the Pistols, I grew up with Dylan and the Stones. Millionaires pushing middle age aren't going to sing about white riots — they sing about *their* lives. Dylan may be getting to be a BOF but we know what he means, and the Stones are at least wise enough to take the piss out of their public image and give us all a laugh.

You can take it or leave it, but "don't criticize what you can't understand" — your kid brother will be calling you and your music pathetic before you're much older.
DAN STEELE, Cheltenham, Glos.

Tony's 25 and grew up with all sorts of people beside the Pistols. He even admits an "embarassing taste" for Dylan. Anyway, neither of them has a kid brother — N.S.

Whilst not wanting to take Parsons' and Burchill's opinions away from them — they're theirs and belong to them etc . . . . I would like to make one point concerning their "Take This God And Stuff It" epistle of last week:

Why must they always judge an artist or group by their worst of last work/stance? This was the case in their novelette *The Boy Looked At Johnny* and was highlighted by John Walters in *Zig Zag* when he commented that to Parsons and Burchill — The Juletones — Keith Moon was a "doped-up drunken buffoon who was a menace to those about him" and not a generous, extrovert, great rock drummer.

And so in last week's *NME* Elvis was "a well-known Las Vegas cabaret artist" and not the guy who all but invented rock music! Sure, he got fat and sung drek but we didn't listen did we?

And Dylan's a "French Symbolist Tom Jones". Well, I remember a couple of years ago, *NME's* best writer, Nick Kent, reviewing a Pete Hammill LP and commenting that he, Kent, had just gone through what Hammill recounted on the record, i.e. losing his best girl. Well, surely someone — of any age — who finds themselves on the dirty end of an affair/marriage can listen to a similar album like "Blood On The Tracks" or "Street Legal" and maybe draw a little strength from them without being labelled a 27-37 year old trying to "feel young and powerful again".

Y'see it's not their opinions that bother me, just the little mocking, snide comments I can't stomach. And before you put me down as "disillusioned ex-Beatles fan", I'm the same age as Joe Strummer.

And I ain't sticking up for old heroes. I grew up on The Who — bloody worshipped them — but I know their last album is rubbish and I can almost hear Parsons and Burchill saying ". . . fat-ass tycoons re-living their middle-class youth in hollow film studios." But I could *never* say that. They gave me "The Seeker", "Behind Blue Eyes" and "I Can See For Miles", y'see — and that's not misplaced loyalty, it's liking music.
BARRY GARDNER, Dundee, Scotland.

God, they're all so understanding and reasonable about the piece. How about a piece of unenlightened rage? — N.S.

If I read the twittering twins latest mess of overwritten bile aright it would appear that Barsons and Purchill have more need of the icons like Dylan and the Stones than we mere slavish saps down here in the real world who maybe just like the noises of their latest records.

A pair of sacred cows for the couple in the corner with the boxing gloves on; the two who seem so threatened by it all.

But seriously though, Tone and Jools, and in all humility, myself and legions of others are deeply and eternally grateful for the way you so unselfishly point out the errors of our faltering ways, with your theories so well thought out and so unerringly consistent.

You are indeed both truly too good for this world.

Your humble servant with the ideologically incorrect record collection awaiting the midnight knock.
OSVALDO ARDILES, Tottenham.

Better, much better — N.S. Foreigners! — J.B.

I must apologize to Elvis Costello for the apalling behaviour of the audience at the Wednesday night concert at the Dominion. We were so ungrateful we took the free records and badges, we bought the tee shirts and programmes, but we didn't go mad when you hit the stage.

It must have been upsetting for you to break off from the intro of "Watching The Detectives" to tell us what a miserable audience we were and how to have fun at a concert. Unfortunately we were so ill-trained — you had to lecture us again before the end, although at least this time we got up to dance.

Listen myopic one, The Ramones, The Undertones and The Rezillos didn't need to tell me to dance, why should you?
BERNARD 'I'm from Catford aren't I mate' SALTMARSH.

I thought backlashes were last year's thing — N.S.

If Elvis Costello reads your illustrious mag, could you please print this so that he knows how much his visit to Ipswich last night (4th Jan) was appreciated, especially the way he dealt with the "Goon Squad" — that is, the bouncers. A great night was had by all and despite what the critics might say "Armed Forces" is a great album.
BOB CARTER, Norwich.

See what I mean? — N.S. Thanks for your fab Christmas ish. Thanks also for the continual bed-wetting, totally over-the-top love and devotion for Certain Stars (Bruce Springsteen to name three) and hack 'em to bits attitude for Certain Other Stars (Brothers Ramone to name one) by none other than Tony 'I invented punk and there wasn't a revolution so it's your fault' Parsons and Julie 'I hate rock but it pays the bills and my latest hair do so who cares' Burchill.

Thanks also for the intellectual posturings, literary pretensions and other general self-inflated bullshit that usually goes above the names of Paul Morley and Ian Penman, neither of whom I understand and I've got an English 'O' Level. Any guy that can quote Arnold Schoenberg (I think that's how you spell it), Eric Fromm and Bertholt Brecht in one article on Siouxsie and the Banshees (a prime bunch of jokers — bring back Chuck Berry before it's too late!) and still take himself seriously must be either important or just full of shit. Thanks also to Nick 'I'm pretentious but I've been at it longer than most and so do it with more style' Kent, and Charlie 'sensible party' Murray.

Could you all please stop taking the whole thing (der biz) so bleeding seriously — the Problems of The World (you know the ones I mean) are serious, but not people with silly names who make rock music which is sometimes entertaining and sometimes a pain in the arse. Lydon got it wrong — his band is just like Cilla Black except a little spikier — it's pure 'showbiz' just like all rock.

It's about time that your writers saw the basic triviality of 'rock music' and their part in it, and having seen this either accept it or move off to become the Karl Marx's and Samuel Beckett's that they would dearly love to be. The Human Condition was last seen south of Watford so you might catch it if you run fast enough.
PAQL,WATT, Fulham, SW10.

EC Woz 'Ere graphic courtesy reader KEVIN CARR of Watford.

PAKAPAKAPAKA...

The Deadly Duo came screaming out of the sun, all cannons blazing...

Tony & Julie share a malted at the NME canteen in this candid off-duty shot.

Thanks for the thanks, the commonsense, and the tip-off. Is all rock 'trivial'? Not if judged by the passions it's always excited in its devotees and enemies. Can rock solve the prboems of the world? Who can? At least rock has tried to change the world — and in part succeeded as I would say. We sent Penman to review the Watford band you mention, but he couldn't find the gig — NEIL 'In The Control Tower' SPENCER.

How about starting a *second* Bruce Springsteen backlash. I really enjoyed the first one.
NICK DYLAN (no relation), St. Albans.
P.S. This looks like a job for *NME's* very own "Drastic Duo."

No chance, they're the ones who helped resurrect Brucie, hadn't you twigged? — N.S.
You spend all year rambling on about writers only giving personal opinions, denying the existence of an *NME* opinion, and what happens?

Come to the crunch and you publish a totally irrelevant *NME* Vinyl Chart in which everybody's lowest common denominator comes out on top. Eliminated are everyone's personal idiosyncrasies that make life interesting. Was 'Bruan Ferry Sings Oklahoma' really Julie's top album? Did John and Olivia beat Dury in Danny's list? How did Parsons manage to find 10 records he actually liked?

Please, it's not too late to publish.
DAVE & CHRIS, Newcastle.

We here at *NME* like to think it was Highest Common Factor rather than Lowest Common Denominator, and rest assured personal idiosyncrasies were given 'special treatment' so they were represented. Danny voted for "YMCA," Julie voted for "Siouxsie And Sham Sing Bob Dylan Live," and TP completed the world's first all-Springsteen poll form.—N.S.

I am young (16). I have very little money. I have met The Clash. I have been in a band which recorded a single (not yet released). I am quite possibly the most radical punk on our estate (this part of the country is pretty thin when it comes to the new wave) so I would have thought that I would have had a reasonable level of 'credibility'. Evidently not. Proof: I still get very funny looks from new radical chic beautiful people (they're called punks round 'ere) when I tell them that I like disco music. I blamed it on the boogie with the Jacksons, I freaked to Chic, I felt mighty real with Sylvester. What many people can't see (or rather, I fear, don't want to) is that this music has just as much power and energy as much of the new wave, and a damn sight more than some of it.

I thought that in the last two years, the spirit of liberalism and permissiveness had established that it doesn't matter a toss what you like, as long as you like it. So why do people go "urghh" and act strangely when I tell them that I've just bought the Hi Tension LP, or when I turn the volume on TOTP up when Dan Hartman comes on, or when I ask for War at discos?

I have spoken to a lot of people who tell me that they like Parliament / Funkadelic etc., so why is it OK to like these but not Heatwave? Is it just because John Peel likes them, or is it because they are so gloriously over the top that they can be treated as a special case, and so people can talk about them without fear of ridicule.

Danny Baker I need you!
JET LAG, Somerset.
Alright Dan, I recognised your typewriter — NS

I'd just like to say how good your article on Public Image Ltd. was but I still think they're so bad.
Eddy, Chelsea.
Is there a backlash before life?—N.S.

Readers' Letters Edited by NEIL SPENCER

Mail your gripes, bouquets, and assorted ravings to us at GASBAG, NME, 5-7 Carnaby St., London W.1.

T-ZERS

The big thaw hits London. All over the frostbitten, crippled metropolis *(could we get the word "teeming" somewhere in here? I've always been rather fond of it — Ed),* icy stalactites slowly melt and dissolve, small furry animals emerge from their hiding places with a murmured "Whew!" (literary license, that last bit) and dinosaurs stir fretfully amidst their cavernous, frozen tombs

Life begins to return to paralysed streets and canals (not to mention limbs) and this'd be a great T-Zer about Uriah Heep if we had one but we haven't, so all we can do is inform you that **Fleetwood Mac** are hard at work in the studio (whatever that entails) putting the finishing touches to their 22-track all-new double album, guaranteed to produce nearly 90 minutes of restful slumber as opposed to the mere 40-odd obtainable from any of their previous packages.

Well, all we here at the Sign Of The Triple Dot can do is wish those talented guys and gals out there on the West Coast a whole lotta luck, and whip out a quick chorus of "Neeeeaaaaaaar Few-cha" to give you a rough idea of when **Public Image Ltd.** will be undertaking what the hissing, distorted voice at the other end of the phone described as "a major Northern date." We wish *them* a lotta luck too. Now who else can we wish a lotta luck to?

We could try **The Clash** who've just had a slightly dubious New Year Honour (who said Olivia Newton-Watervole had it all sewn up?) in the shape of "Give 'Em Enough Rope" getting designated as Album Of The Year by no less an authority tham *Time* magazine. To achieve this honour, they beat out **Ry Cooder's** "Jazz", **Lee Dorsey's** "Night People" a **Keith Jarrett** album (all the people who know *which* Keith Jarrett album are out of the office on some mysterious elitist errand) and **Nick Lowe's** "Jesus Of Cool." Acceptance and recognition is one thing, but this is getting ridiculous . .

You may think you've been on the receiving end of heavy-duty TV saturation advertising before (whoever that is in the back row humming "Millions of parts for thousands of cars" can just get up and leave right *now),* but wait until you get whacked round the chops with the £100,000 campaign being set up for *The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle* by **Malcolm McLaren,** currently describing the movie as "A modern *Oliver Twist".* We see, Malcolm . . . Steve Jones as the Artful Dodger, J.R. as Oliver, Sid as — sorry, have we misinterpreted the statement? Oh well. One person who we're sure will be wishing Malcolm a lotta luck on all his future ventures is **Joe Stevens** still nursing the $1700 phone bill with which Malcolm stuck him and discovering that the price of aiding and comforting **Sid Vicious** is to be unilaterally frozen out by most of the New York music business establishment . . .

Two mighty minds meet and then pass on like unmanned trawlers in the night; **John Travolta** recently plucked up the courage to introduce himself to **Marlon Brando** at a film festival, you'll be glad to know. Grabbing the patriarchal thespian's mitt enthusiastically, Revolta spake as follows; "Hi, I'm John Travolta!" an unimpressed Brando looked the disco king up and down and then spake as follows; "of course you are." exit Jor-el. leaving Travolta with what we would imagine to be not unadjacent to a slight sinking feeling . . .

Don Henley of **The Eagles** was recently quoted as having spake as follows; "I'm fed up with computer clone-rock . . . androgynous, heartless, gutless crap." does this mean that he's leaving The Eagles? . . .

And while we're on the subject, the 1977 FBI crime index reveals that — on average — one violent crime is committed in the very wonderful United States of America) to whom we'd like to wish a lotta luck in all their future endeavours) every 31 seconds. This breaks down as follows; a murder every 27 minutes, a rape every eight minutes, a robbery every 78 seconds and an aggravated assault every minute. Not to mention the fact that somewhere in the USA at any minute of the day and night, someone is making a disco record . . .

This probably goes a long way towards explaining the fact that the hot cult item for film buffs is currently on sale in california; a set of *Psycho* shower curtains emblazoned with a life-size knife-wielding still of **Anthony Perkins** (welcome back to T'Zerz, Tony) . . .

Who says it isn't worth a man's while to join a famous pop group? Certainly not **Kenney Jones,** late of **The Small Faces, The Faces** and **The Small Faces.** Since joining **The Who,** Kantankerous Ken has been featured in a fashion spread by *Ritz* magazine (with the end result that he got to keep around £600 worth of free threads) and the grateful recipient of a highly pricey Polaroid movie camera as a Christmas present from MCA, The Oo's American record company. Which may not be all that much, but it's better than a steel-capped Doc Marten's in the niagras or getting sued for maintenance like **Al Stewart.** The pensive balladeer is currently on the business end of a suit from 18-year-old **Doreen De-St-Aubin** (don't ask us how to pronounce it — ask Al), who claims that he is the father of her five-month-old daughter .

OK, it's the pin-up you've been waiting for! LENE LOVICH in the bath. Pic: DAVID CORIO.

More **Public Image** trivia (or PiT for short): at the first of their pre-Rainbow warmup gigs in Brussels, the band played a mere five or six numbers and were — by all accounts — somewhat scrappy and you can take that literally, but at the second (in Paris) a sold-out crowd saw PiL deliver a much better show, including — at **Keith Levine's** insistence — a version of the **Pistols'** "Problems", which **Lydon** was rather unenthusiastic about singing. This presumably explains why he turned his back on the audience during that section of the performance . . .

Nowt as queer as folks etc: three months after its original release as the B-side of "Sarah Smiles", **Bram Tchaikovsky's** "Turn On The Light" was stamped "A" by some enterprising person at Criminal Records and sent to the Beeb. It fell into the hands of one **Peter Powell,** who promptly picked it as his Record Of The Week. All of this will be of marginal interest to Tchaikovsky's former colleagues in **The Motors,** who are still theoretically active despite out *T-Zerz* Award last week, despite the fact that their manager — dapper, urbane **Richard Ogden — plans his complicated life in a Linda McCartney** diary which was originally intended for lean, attractive **Nick Garvey** before Ogden intercepted and snaffled it . . .

Baldfaced impertinance: currently on Noo Yawk news stands is a fine new periodical called *The Razor's Edge,* dedicated to the notion that baldness can be beautiful and erotic," It costs $3 a throw and already boasts 1300 subscribers. No need to hide your copies when your mates come round, **Devoto** . . . we at *T-Zerz* understand . . .

Slightly out to lunch: EX—**Television** guitarist **Richard Lloyd** has been showing the strain more than somewhat in recent weeks. He was recently observed chasing **Levi** of **Levi And The Rockets** down the hallway of the block of flats they both inhabit in an enthusiastic if misguided attempt to impale the latter on a large sabre . . .

Justice is blind: after former Canadian Prime Minister **John Diefenbaker** failed in his attempt to appeal what he regarded as an overly lenient sentence on **Keith Richard** (he got a suspended sentence, a year's probation and a court order to pay a benefit concert for the blind, if you recall), The Blind Organisation Of Ontario with Self-Help Tactics (BOOST) has announced that it doesn't want Keef to perform for them . . .

Which can't have surprised **Mick Jagger** nearly as much as the discovery of a naked burglar in his closet last September. The interloper was **James Harrington,** a 26-year-old karate black belt who was Jagger's bodyguard on last summer's U.S. Stones tour. Harrington was busted five days later in New York with £10,000 worth of jewellery and $3000 in cash lifted from Big Mick's L.A. mansion. Some boys are just naughty, Mick . . .

This we won't comment upon: **Britt Ekland** is to star in an upcoming movie with the working title of *Super Groupie,* while **Elvis Costello's** Hawaiian gigs were filmed by **Chuck Statler,** who shot the celebrated **Devo** film clips used in the Spuds' act on their last tour . . .

And will you please meet and greet an informal conclave of Rock Against Ageism in the unlikely form of waggish Walthamstow wizards Small Wonder Records, whose upcoming singles include "Violence Grows" by **The Fatal Microbes** (a four-piece featuring a 10-year-old drummer, a 12-year-old guitarist and a 14-year-old girl singer) and "Piano Lessons" by **The Poison Girls,** who feature a middle-aged housewife-turned-vocalist who also happens to be the legal guardian of The Microbes' lead singer. Are we kidding you? We certainly aren't . . .

Hot on the heels of his accolade as "the world's finest producer" from no less an authority than **Phil Spector,** dashing **Dai Edmunds** was quoted in *Cashbox* as opining that "there are only a couple of real rock and roll bands around right now: **Cheap Trick** and **Rockpile."** Talk about selling yourself short! He also enthused, "This is the first time I've got an album, a single, a tour, a band, a manager and an agent all at the same time." What can we do but wish this happy chappy a lotta luck with his future endeavours too . . .

The blues was never like this: American beaver glossy mag *Hustler* (which would feature "dildoes and crucifixes" if porno publisher turned born-again Christian **Larry Flynt** has his way) features ageing bluesman **John Mayall** as both nudie centrespread and critic of other — errhm — Men's Magazines currently on the market. As is widely known in shobiz circles, Mayall is the possessor of a porno library of astonishing size and variety, passed on to him by his dad . . .

Mother Nature Busted: West Country gendarmes are currently wageing a heavy campaign against a plant known locally as "Devil's Weed" or "Old Nick's Nicotine", which apparently has interesting effects. Folks have flipped on this hallucinogenic vegetable, seen things that weren't there, attempted to roll up the yellow lines on the road etc, causing bewildered Feds to scour the bleak moors for this fell plant. *T-Zers* advises them to publish lots of detailed photos of the plant (in order to enable people to recognise it) and diagrams and maps (to enable people to find it) and lots of Londoners will be descending on the place before you could even say "That's illegal" in order to do their civic duty and destroy this new menace to our civilisation . . .

Over in dreadland, hotspur Tottenham record company Third World are resisting the vigorous challenge by Burning Sounds to corner the UK reggae market by importing vast natural resources of haman bauxite to these shores from Jamaica. Currently in town and holed up in the North Lodnon roots'n'culture centres of Hackney, Hornsey, Harringay and Harlesden — courtesy of **Cournt Shelly** — include **The Heptones, Jackie Edwards, Striker Lee, Niney the Observer, Linval Thompson** and **Jackie Mittoo,** the latter of whom has just produced an album with **Alton Ellis** — due out on Third World this Spring . . .

Next week, "Phew what a scorcher" headlines, nipples by the Serpentine, eggs frying on pavements and drought warnings from the Ministry of Weather . . .

Pic: TONY MOTTRAM.

Who says Devo come from Akron? Ring them at home in Dagenham.

BETTER BADGES

TOP TEN

This week		Last week
1	PIL	1
2	CLASH POLICE	2
3	THE JAM	5
4	BUZZCOCKS	4
5	SMIRKS AGAINST TRAVOLTA	3
6	LOVE	6
7	BITES	7
8	ALTERNATIVE ULSTER	–
9	X-RAY SPEX	–
10	GANG OF FOUR	–

New Releases

30p Drunk Punk
25p Tapper '76, African Herbsman, What you see it what you are, Gen X45, Rock against Xmas, Merry Wanna.
20p (I want) more rope, Sham 69, Cabaret Voltaire, Prag-Vec, Lightning Raiders, Pink Fairies Love, The Doomed, Spizz Oil, Germ Free, Kraftwerk, Tony Parsons. Julie Burchill, Gauche Siouxsie.

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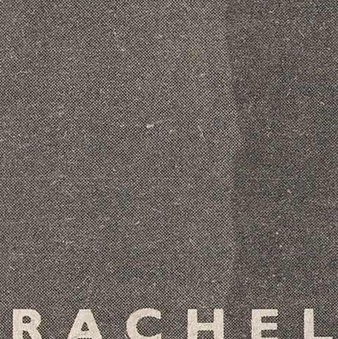
HOW CAN I KNOW WHAT I THINK TILL I SEE WHAT I SAY

RACHEL SWEET

The Single:
B-A-B-Y

BUY 39



The Album:
FOOL AROUND

SEEZ 12

STIFF RECORDS